Naam or Word

By

Kirpal Singh

I have written books without any copyright—no rights reserved—because it is a Gift of God, given by God, as much as sunlight; other gifts of God are also free.

—from a talk by Kirpal Singh, with the author of a book after a talk to students of religion at Santa Clara University, San Jose, California on November 16, 1972.

The text of this book is the same as what was published during the lifetime of Master Kirpal Singh. Aside from formatting, punctuation and capitalization corrections, no changes have been made to the text; it is the same as what was approved by the Master.

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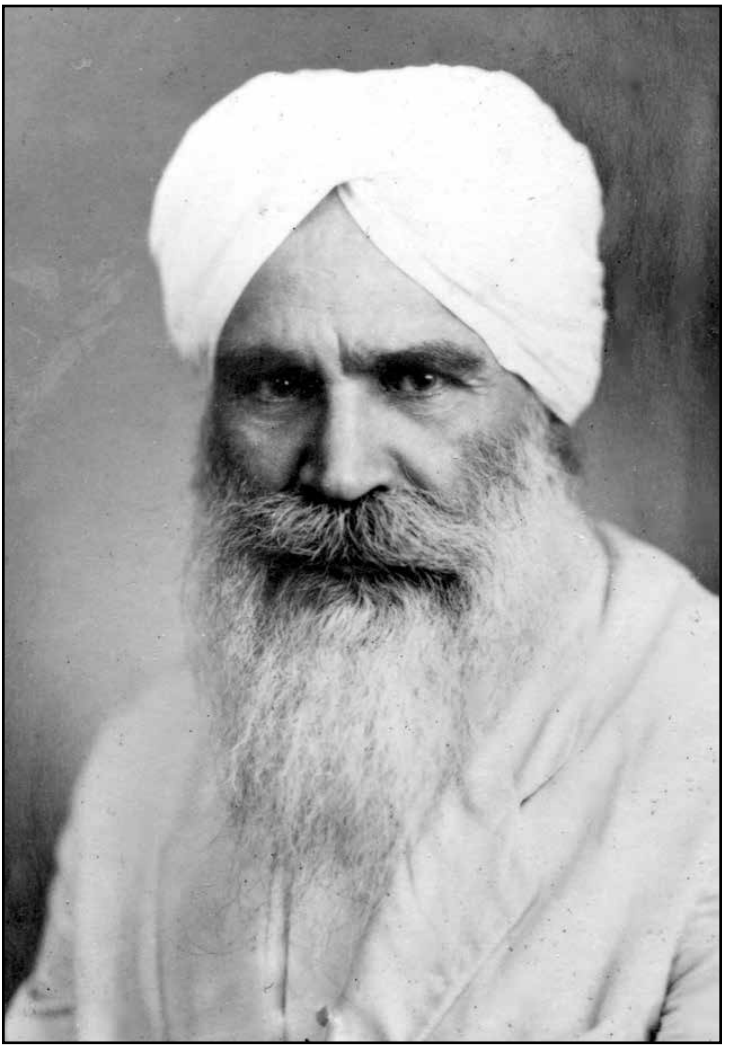
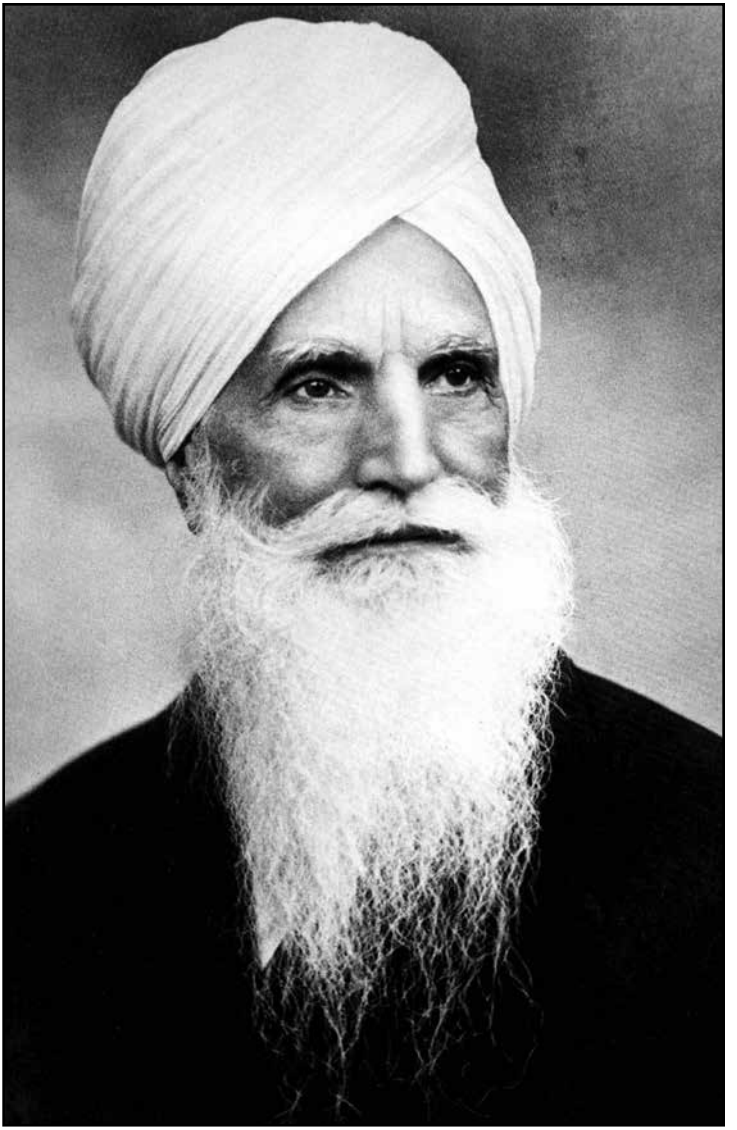


Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
(1894-1974)



Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj
(1858-1948)

Dedicated
to the Almighty God
working through all Masters who have come
and Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj
at whose lotus feet
the author imbibed sweet elixir of
Holy Naam — the Word

Sant Kirpal Singh passed on from this earth in 1974. As such, He is no longer taking on new people to guide out of this world and back to God. He left many books that explain, as much as can be in a worldly language, the meaning of life. The books and the Ruhani Satsang website http://www.RuhaniSatsangUSA.org are maintained to help stir an interest in God and to help people know what to look for in their search for the way back home.

When asked about a successor, we can only offer this quote from the Master:

> *Today there is a great awakening beginning. Some have got the answer, some have not; but the search to solve the mystery of life has been born all over the world. The day that question arises in the mind is the greatest day of one's life; for once it is born, it does not succumb until it is satisfied.*
>
> *So, make your life an example of the teachings you follow — live up to them.*
>
> *If you have a strong desire to get it, then God Himself will make the arrangements for you.*

(Excerpts from a talk published in the January 1971 issue of *Sat Sandesh)*

Prajapatir vai idam-agre asit
Tasya vak dvitiya asit
Vak vai Paramam Brahma
— Vedas

In the beginning was Prajapati
(the Creator),
With Him was the Vak (the Word),
And the Vak (the Word) was verily
the Supreme Brahma.

About the Author:

Considered by many people who met him in the East and in the West to have been a living example of a true Saint of spirituality, Kirpal Singh was born in a rural setting in Sayyad Kasran in the Punjab (then in India, now in Pakistan) on February 6, 1894. He followed the career of a civil servant in the government of India, and retired on his own pension in 1947.

Following instructions from his Master (Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj, 1858-1948), he founded and directed RUHANI SATSANG. He was Commissioned by God and authorized by his Master to carry forward the spiritual work of connecting sincere seekers after God with the WORD (or NAAM). He continued in that capacity until he left the earth plane on August 21 , 1974.

Elected four times, consecutively, as President of the World Fellowship of Religions, he upheld the truth that, though the various religions are different schools of thought, the aim of all religions is one and the same. Kirpal Singh visited the major cities in the United States on the occasions of each of his three world tours: in 1955, in 1963-64, and again in 1972, staying in the West for three months or more, each time.

From his study at the feet of Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj and from his own personal inner experiences of a spiritual nature, Kirpal Singh was eminently qualified to convey to sincere people everywhere the importance of self knowledge and God realization.

To the Honest Seeker

WE have an Upanishadic text that tells us that Truth is one, though sages have decribed it variously. But to define It is to limit, and since Truth (i.e., the whole Truth) is illimitable, It, by Its very nature, remains undefined. It is more a matter of inner experience and realization than of comprehension and apprehension on the intellectual level.

"The surest way unto Truth," says Henri Bergson, the great philosopher, "is by perception, by intuition, by reasoning to a certain point and then by taking a mortal leap."

Again, "True knowledge is an action of the soul and is perfect without the senses," says Ben Jonson. The Reality can neither be known by the senses, nor by the mind or the intellect, nor by the vital airs that keep the physical frame, both of the Universe and the individual, going.

"Man is a little world made cunningly of elements and an angelic spirit" (John Donne). He is a composite entity that unites in himself the physical, the subtle and the causal principles: the body, the mind, the supermind and the soul, one behind the other, the last one being the source of all life, the very life principle enlivening every thing that lives.

There is within the all-comprehending ambit of animal instincts, some secret urge which drives the chosen few, called the elect, toward the transcending of animal impulses, leading to complete disinterestedness by total disregard of the animal-ego on the one hand and willing submission to a self-sought death on the other, in spite of the strong opposition of instincts, impulses and ego arrayed against an inspired soul. There is a subtle communication between mystery and mystery, between the unknown soul and the unknown Reality, and it is only at one particular point in the texture of life that the hidden Truth seems to burst through the enveloping veils of ignorance; and this happens only when one is able to disimprison the soul from the facts of life. John Keats, the great Romantic poet, speaks of this blissful state:

Wherein lies happiness? In that which becks
Our ready minds to fellowship Divine
A fellowship with Essence; till we shine
Full alchemized and free of space.

The secret of Truth then lies in the little "great self" in Man, the self, the seemingly little thing of no consequence neglected and cast aside and almost lost in the mighty swirl of mind and matter, and yet a great thing once it comes to its own after breaking through the prison bars of life, the senses that keep one enmeshed all the time. The inner

man or the spirit-in-man is, therefore, to be freed from the tentacles of the outer man, consisting of matter and mind, before the Self can rise in self-consciousness and become aware of the Cosmic Awareness. All this is a practical possibility by a process of self-analysis and withdrawal, and not a figment of the imagination as most of us might think.

As "self-knowledge" precedes "God knowledge," all the sages and seers have from time immemorial laid emphasis on "Gnothe Seauton" or "Nosce Teipsum" as known among the ancient Greeks and Romans respectively. And to know oneself, one must detach one's self from the life of the senses. This is exactly what Jesus meant when he taught, "He that findeth his life shall lose it" and "he that loseth his life shall find it." Thus one has to choose between the two lives: the life of the senses and flesh on the one hand and the life of the spirit and Awareness on the other, for one cannot have both at the same time; and unless one is able to rise above body consciousness, one cannot make his or her choice between the two. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other."[1] Guru Nanak has said:

Without actual transcendence of the spirit
The magic spell of the world dissolves not.

This then is the way Truthward or Godward. "Truth is one," says Nanak, "and comes as a pure and simple gift from a Master of Truth." When we say "One," that too is incorrect for that means limiting the Limitless and finitizing the Infinite. Kabir, therefore, speaks of God or Truth:

If I say He is one that too is inapt,
The idea of duality in Him is but a
blasphemy.
He is what He is, neither the one nor the other,
Something, yet whole and self-contained.

The numeral "One" is but a pointer and an index to the Great Being beyond numerology itself. Guru Nanak, speaking of Truth, tells us:

Truth was when there was nothing:
Truth was before all ages began;
Truth existeth now, O Nanak!
And Truth shall exist forever more.[2]

"Absolute Truth" is of course imageless, but when it came into being, Its primal manifestations were the Sound and the Light Principles, collectively called Nad in the Vedas, Udgit in the Upanishads, Sraosha in Zend Avesta, Word in the Holy Gospels, Kalma in the Koran, Naam or Shabd in the Holy Granth — all signifying the two-fold aspect of the Divine Nature or the Creative Life Principle in Nature.

Nameless and devoid of all forms He is,
And yet all names and forms are His.

The great Rishis and Munis, we are told, had a direct inner contact with Truth or the Godhead within. To Moses were revealed the sacred precepts of the Decalogue or the Ten Commandments in the midst of Thunder and Flame signifying the twin aspects of Truth Itself. The Prophet Mohammed had to cut his way through the moon — Shaqul-Qamar — as he ascended on the wings of lightning (barq). Prince Siddhartha, when he contacted the Light within, came to be known as Buddha or the Enlightened One. Christ assured his following of his true nature, in no idle words:

I am the Light of the world, and he that followeth Me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life.[3]

And again,

If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of Light.[4]

"Mysticism," says Dean Inge, "is the core of religion," and language has no means of conveying the super-sensual experiences of the mystics. "The Light shineth in the Darkness and the Darkness comprehendeth it not,"[5] is the fate of the common man today.

Man's spirit can return to God through the
deepest of man's conflicts and negations . . .
(and by) total denial of his finite being.

A.C. BRADLEY

Walter De La Mare, in the "Dreams," gives us a glimpse:

And once — from agony set free —
I scanned within the womb of night,
A hollow in-woven orb of light.
Thrilling with beauty, no tongue could tell,
And knew It for life's Citadel.

Both soul and God live together in the holy temple of the human body, but alas! one has not known the other. About this inborn relationship, St. Catherine tells us,

God is in the soul and the soul is in God,
As the sea is in the fish and the fish is in
the sea.

But can we have this beatific vision? "Yes," say the Masters, "as surely as two and two make four."

Feel we these things? that moment have we
stept
Into a sort of Oneness, and our state
Is like a floating Spirit.

JOHN KEATS

To return to the point from which we began — namely, that Truth is infinite and can be only

inwardly realized and not mentally comprehended — let us touch upon the claims of science. Science too declares that it seeks to arrive at Truth in an objective and a detached fashion, called the "scientific way," and most of its adherents even go on to say that science is the only means to Truth, for mysticism and spiritual realization are too personal, too subjective and too rare a phenomenon to be trusted. But can science really bring us to Truth? Can we equate factual knowledge with Truth? Does not Truth imply a knowledge not only of the various objects composing the sum total of existence but also their interrelations to the finest degree, and is not this aspect of Truth the more important one?

Science of course does give us factual knowledge about objects and to some extent their interrelations as well. But science, at least at present, seems to be an endless process: the findings of today being outdated by those of tomorrow. Thus its picture of Truth, whatever it may be, is an ever shifting one, and in fact it can never be a picture of Truth, for Truth in Its very nature is changeless. The adherents of science fail to see this significant limitation of science for they mistake knowledge for Truth and forget that if science is to be our only means to Truth, then man can never hope to reach that goal. Looking on the other side of the picture, the side which we have already discussed, there is the incontroverted testimony of the saints and

the mystics who tell us that Truth can be realized by man, and who go on to say that a pursuit of objective factual knowledge is a distraction from It. The poets speak of intuitive moments when they feel the presence of a spiritual unity behind the material diversity.

And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime,
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air, And
the blue sky, and in the mind of man.

WORDSWORTH

While the mystics of all times and climes tell us with one voice that this Inner Reality or Truth is not only a matter of intuition and feeling but of actual super-sensuous realization, and it is in this connection that the study of Yoga — Surat Shabd Yoga in particular — reveals its importance. We cannot, if we really seek the Truth, afford to ignore spirituality, as so many modern thinkers have tended to do, for It is a highway to Truth, and as suggested, perhaps the only highway to Truth. It is in this context that an attempt has been made to explain, in this book, the basic concept (which of course is the same in spite of an endless variety in nomenclature) of the various words used by the Masters to signify the Wordless in His primordial manifestation — the life current

creating, sustaining and controlling the endless creation.

My heartfelt thanks to Shri Bhadra Sena especially and others who took great pains in helping to bring out this work and spent many hours in this labor of love.

KIRPAL SINGH

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BOOK ONE

Naam or Word

Naam or Word

1. Introductory

NAAM is easier said than known and practiced. It is only an adept in the mysteries of Naam who knows its true significance and the great power that lies hidden in it. Apparently it is just a syllable, but what it connotes is beyond understanding even by the most learned in book knowledge; though it may be possible to apprehend it through the grace of one well versed not only in the theory, but in the practice as well, of the Word.

"Name" and the "named" are, in fact, one and the same. There is hardly any distinction between the two; one is the abstract form of that which is concrete. Light cannot be separated from the sun. The two go together all the world over. Similarly Godhood and God cannot be demarcated and set aside in watertight compartments as two separate entities. The former is just an attribute of the latter. "Naam" is nothing more nor less than Godhood of God; one may call it what one may like — the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, etc. It is the primal manifestation of God, responsible for the entire creation. It is the primeval form of God. St. John speaks of it thus:

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of man. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not.[1]

In these memorable words, St. John has tried to give us some idea of the marvelous nature of the Word or Naam, as it is also called. It combines in it the triple principle of Creation, Sustenance and Destruction — the Trimurti of the Hindu mythology of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva — the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer respectively, all the three deriving their motor power from Godhood or God-in-action, Naam or Word.

Hazrat Moieen-ud-Din Chishti, in this context, says,

> Name and the Named are but one,
> Light of Name witnesseth His glory.

All that is, is of, and from Naam, for it pervades everywhere. It is the life principle of the entire creation. He in whom this Word or Naam becomes personified is called a saint for it is said that, "Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Such a one has reached the summum bonum of life and gained the El Dorado of human existence. For him there is nothing more to wish for and aspire

for. On the other hand, one who has not been able during his lifetime to establish a contact with Naam, at the time of death quits the body like a defeated gambler who leaves a gambling den with empty hands. Sant Kabir says,

> Better by far is a leper with weeping sores,
> if established in Naam,
> Than a fine stalwart swain. who knows not
> the value of Naam.

Greatness of Naam and its need

The access to spiritual regions cannot be gained except with the wings of Naam. A Persian poet says,

> It behooves thee to fly to the higher realms,
> and that thou canst do with the wings of
> Naam.

Again,

> If thou wishest union with Truth, thou must get united with Naam (i.e., Word or the manifest form of Truth unmanifested) for therein lies the only possible union with Truth. The constant meditation of Name means constant companionship with the Named.

A touch with the Divine current purifies a person of all iniquities. All doubts and distractions disap-

pear and the mind becomes steady and firm, with the result that God's light is reflected therein.

> If thou wert to cleanse the mirror of thy mind with the sweet remembrance of His Name, His glory shall surely shine within thee.

Kabir Sahib has beautifully described the value of Naam:

> Naam may appear but a monosyllable
> compared with the countless sins that
> abound;
> But a little dose of the Naam when taken,
> reduces the entire garbage to a heap of
> ashes;
> And the practice of the Naam rubs clean all
> the mental impurities;
> For the Naam acts as a spark of fire in a
> powder magazine;
> By communion with the Naam, one
> transcends the limitations of the flesh,
> And reaches far beyond the realm of the
> pairs of opposites.
>
> All the supernal powers serve but Naam;
> Blessed with Naam, one becomes the abode
> of all powers.
>
> KABIR

A contact with Naam assures salvation to all, whether good or bad, learned or unlettered. As sun and fire give warmth and light to all, snow

and ice give exhilarating freshness, so Naam cannot fail to produce its effect, no matter how the contact may come about, with or without faults. Khwaja Nizam-ud-Din Chishti says,

> The glory of God's Naam has attuned my
> body and soul,
> The parched and thirsty get honeyed
> nectar from it.

Various Names of God

The sages and the saints have described God in innumerable terms, as for instance Swami or Soami, meaning Lord God; Nirala (peerless or without a compeer); Anami (the nameless); Har Rai, Agam or Alakh (the incomprehensible or the ineffable); Ram Rai or Sat Purush (the eternal Truth or unchangeable permanence); Ek Ankar (the one life breath or live principle); Puran Chetan Purush (complete consciousness); Akal (timeless or the deathless one).

All these are just attributive or qualitative names — names signifying one or another of God's attributes. Such names simply describe any one aspect or facet of God as appealed foremost to someone's individual liking. Thousands of such names appear in holy scriptures: Ram (all-pervading), Rahim (gracious or merciful), Girdhari (encompassing), Murari, Allah, Khuda, Wah-i-Guru, and the like. The Jews call Him Yah-

weh or Jehovah. All these names are worthy of our adoration for each one of them tries to single out some aspect of the Beloved.

I revere each one of Thy names, O God! [2]

GURU NANAK

What is Naam?

We talk and hear a lot about Naam, but never for a moment pause to ponder over what it is, and how to gain salvation or Nirvana through it.

What is that Name, the remembrance
whereof leads to Nirvana? [3]

What is that name, the repetition whereof
enables a person to cross over the world
of sorrow? [4]

GURU TEG BAHADUR

In fact the Lord God is nameless, but we have given Him myriads of names. What name can indeed describe the Formless, the Limitless, the Incomprehensible, one beyond the grasp of senses and the intellect? Still, man has, through the ages, endeavored to put Him in the trammels of words and clothe Him with epithets just for the sake of expression, though all combined together fail hopelessly to do any justice to Him. After all, words do come from a limited source and cannot possibly limit the Limitless:

If all the mountains were pounded into ink-powder and mixed with the waters of the oceans, pens were made out of all the forest trees, and the entire earth were a sheet of paper, the glory of God or Naam or God-into-expression Power could not even then be described.

SAHJO BAI

All names are Thine and so are all forms Thine, but all fail to enumerate Thy countless attributes.[5]

GURU NANAK

Thou embracest in Thee all powers and potentialities, all riches and treasures, for Thou art the Primeval Cause, the Causeless Cause both material and efficient. The Lord of all, Thy names are numberless.[6]

GURU ARJAN

God has names beyond our comprehension. He can not be known and no name can describe Him.

The learned and the unlettered have done their very best but have not been able to evaluate even a particle of His greatness.[7]

O God! so many art Thy names, that the poor tongue faileth to enumerate them.[8]

GURU RAM DAS

Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, says,

> Who can sing of the glory of all Thy names?
> Still the wise tell us of Thine attributes.

All names fall into two categories:

(i) Karam Naam or names indicative of gunas (qualities) or swabhave, that is, qualitative or attributive names, like Ram, Rahim and Karim (i.e., all-pervading, merciful and compassionate).

(ii) Pura Purbala Naam or personal names which are all-comprehensive, ancient and eternal.

> We generally sing the glory of God with
> man-made names,
>
> But His Great Name — Sat Naam — is
> eternally the same.[9]
>
> GURU ARJAN

The question that now arises is one of choice: which of these countless names is the most efficacious and speedily fruitful? The Hindus in general glorify "Om" and speak highly of "Ram-Naam." The Muslims prefer "Allah" and the Sikhs "Wah-i-Guru." Every religious order has thus adopted one or the other name as a central tenet and makes use of it in their daily worship and devotion. To confine one's self to any of these exclu-

sively would mean making God partial. Our quest leads us to a number of issues such as:

(a) Selection of the most fruitful name.

(b) Mode of repetition: Should the name selected be repeated mentally or through meditation on the meaning of the word selected.

If we refer to the Sikh sacred literature, we come across varied references, some dealing with Japa or repetition, others with Sunan or hearing, Manan or acceptance, Dhyan or meditation, and last but not least, Self-illumination and Sound Principle as well.

> Remember Naam, O my brethren-in-faith,
> This grants peace, O keep the mind ever fixed in Naam.[10]
>
> By hearing Naam, the mind gets stilled,
> The greatness of Naam is known through the Master.[11]
>
> Commune with Naam till the last breath of life,
> This brings proximity to God and He saves in the end.[12]
>
> Those who contact not the Naam, why do they come into the world?
> Arid is the field of life for them and they die a miserable death.[13]

The devotees of the Lord are His representatives and unto them we pray,
We, the filthy worms, are at their feet, let the Divine light fill us through.[14]

A contact with the Sound Current gives self realization which is the *summum bonum* of life. By it one is washed of all impurities of the mind and easily merges into Life Divine. O Nanak! this contact is established by a rare gurmukh.[15]

GURU RAM DAS

A contact with Naam makes one self-luminous, with luminosity vying with myriads of suns.[16]

GURU ARJAN

By Thy grace manifest the Divine light of Naam.[17]

GURU RAM DAS

In Naam there is perfect food, both for the eyes and the ears. Next we hear of the sinking in and dwelling of Naam in the tablet of the mind. It is clearly stated in the sacred Sikh scriptures that this contact can only be had beyond the domain of senses and sensory organs:

Naam is not the subject of the eyes. It is something wonderful and indescribable.[18]

GURU NANAK

References like these lead to but one irresistible conclusion: that the true Naam is something beyond this or that word. It is a great magnetic Power, and a force that can grip the mind. It is characterized by sweet strains and melodious tunes, which can be heard, and powerful light which can be seen and witnessed. It is this Naam or Power and Force of Godhead which cannot be comprehended by the senses and can only be realized and experienced in Super-sensual planes. It is a Life Current that pervades the entire creation and is hence called Ram Naam or All Embracing Impulse. Kabir Sahib says:

> There are myriads of names in the world,
> but none of them can grant salvation.
> The Primeval Name is a hidden one and a
> rare soul can know and realize it.

Oral repetition of names has its own place and utility, and is needed for some purposes, but it cannot lead to self-realization and God-realization, both of which can be achieved only through contact with God-in-action, call it what we may — Shabd, Ram-Naam, Kalma, Word, Sruti, Sra-osha, etc.; and this contact can come about only through the Grace of some competent living Master.

> Everyone is repeating the monosyllable *Ram*
> but gets no touch with the Power *Ram*
> behind the monosyllable:

> It is the Grace of the Master alone that can give a living touch with the All-Embracing Life Impulse and the wish-yielding Elixir.

A thirsty traveler can not quench his thirst by simply crying for "water," unless he actually gets the substance, water. Yari Sahib, therefore, says:

> The tongue tires itself out by repeating the word *Ram,*
> The repetition of the word "water" never quenches the thirst,
> One may slake the thirst by taking a draught of water.

Kabir Sahib, in this context, speaks thus:

> Mere repetition of this or that name, without an actual touch with the named, is of no avail. If one were to become rich by calling for riches, then there would hardly be one who is not rich.

Nameless is He, and yet all names are His. If one can but get in touch with His Power, all names become inconsequential, for actual contact is what matters and not the words. If a thirsty person gets the substance, water, to quench his thirst, it does not matter if he calls for it as ab (Persian), water (English), aqua (Latin), eau (French), ma (Arabic) or hudor (Greek), for his purpose is served by any of these words. Similarly, the word "bread" is quite a different thing from the real

bread. While one is just an expression used to distinguish it from other things, the other is the real bread that dispels hunger. So one must strive to contact the Reality rather than run after the shadowy words that stand for the Reality.

From a mere name one has to get to the named before one can have the real benefit, a satisfaction to the ever-inner urge for filling the inner vacuum of the soul. Maulana Rumi saith:

O thou repeater of the Name, go and
search out the Named,
Without the Named, how can a mere name
give thee comfort?

Sant Tulsi Das, the famous author of the Hindi Ramayana or the biography of Lord Rama, has given precedence to Naam over both Rama and Brahma, since Naam is at once the Creator and the controlling power of Brahma, Parbrahma, Sat Naam, Alakh and Agam.

(1) In magnanimity and large-heartedness, Naam far excels both *Brahm* and *Rama.*

(2) Personal and Impersonal God are the two aspects of Brahm for He is at once Indescribable, Beginningless, Incomprehensible and Formless. I feel that Naam far transcends these two; for both of them are within its controlling Power, from age to age. Though both Brahm and Ram

are beyond comprehension, yet they can be known and realized through Naam. I therefore say that Naam is greater than both Ram and Brahm.

(3) I cannot possibly sing the greatness of Naam. Even the blessed Lord Rama himself can hardly do any justice to the glory of Naam.

The last dictum of Sant Tulsi Das is significant indeed. Rama is said to be the incarnation of Brahm, and the latter with the entire hierarchy upward is the by-product or creation of Naam. In Jap Ji Sahib, Guru Nanak also refers to it pertinently:

> There is one Spirit that has created the Universe; and given over its control to the three guardian angels: *Brahma, Vishnu* and *Siva,* one of whom is entrusted with the task of creation, the other with that of sustenance or maintenance, and the third with that of administering justice according to the Divine Law. That Spirit always keeps a watchful eye on the works of all the three, but the latter have no knowledge of It.[19]

The majority of the multitudinous world has forgotten the Reality — the Ever-enduring Spirit of Naam — and are mightily busy in parrot-like repetition of the so many names of that Spirit,

with the result that they keep engrossed all the time in gathering husk and chaff instead of the grain. Hence all their hard labor goes unfruitful and they live in a famished state without getting any satisfaction:

Those who ignore Naam or the Power of God and are busy with various other names are just like muckworms wallowing in filth.[20]

The scriptural studies, the religious debates are all *Mayaic* or illusory and shadowy nothings,
O Nanak! except Naam, nothing is stable, and all acts not centered on Naam are fruitless.[21]

Verily, verily, O Nanak! the true study is the study of Naam.[22]

Bookish knowledge is all worldly wisdom.[23]

GURU AMAR DAS

Hari Naam is the essence of all religions.[24]

GURU TEG BAHADUR

Everyone wants happiness but gets what God may ordain,
All acts of devotion and charity count for nothing when compared with Naam.[2]

GURU NANAK

Naam far excels *Japa, Tapa,* deeds of charity
and the like,
A contact with Naam gets all desires
fulfilled.[26]

One cannot, by the study of the scriptures,
cross the ocean of life,
Naam far transcends all acts of piety and
charity.[27]

GURU ARJAN

Naam is a Power and Motor Force behind everything and hence outer actions like pilgrimages to holy places, acts of charity, fasts, penances, yajnas, or sacrificial oblations to fire and the like are of no avail to a seeker after Truth. Naam alone is the link between God and man. It is with the help of Naam that one can traverse to higher regions. It serves as an electric lift that can safely carry a spirit yearning for God-realization. Except Naam, there is no other Path Godward.

> The body may be consigned to the flames or cut to pieces. The mind and the body may be made an offering and allowed to be consumed from day to day. All such penances and austerities are of no consequence when compared with Hari Naam.
>
> The body may be cut in twain and the head be cut off for an offering or else it may be allowed to rot in the Himalayan snows, yet none of these acts can cure the mind.

Alas, these have no efficacy, for we have tried them all with no avail.

One may give millions in charity including horses and elephants, lands and kine; yet these will make him a bloated coxcomb. It is only Ram Naam (the all-pervading Sound Current) that can still the mind, and It comes as a pure gift from a Master-soul. All intellectual wranglings, Hath-yogic practices, and scriptural studies are but the varied types of karmic bondages. The only way to freedom and salvation is a Master-saint.[28]

Truth is greater than everything but higher still is true living.[29]

GURU NANAK

In Sukhmani, we have a wonderful account of Naam:

The rosary, the penances, knowledge and thinking,
The study of shastras, smritis and scriptures,
The yogic practices and the performances of rites and rituals,
A life of solitude in the deep recesses of the forests,
All endeavors of various types, including deeds of charity for name and fame, cutting of limbs in self-conceit,
All these and more still, do not come up to the merit of Naam,

O Nanak! a beloved of the Master is ever engaged in communion with the Word.
Circumambulation of the globe and a life of longevity,
Observance of austerities coupled with renunciation,
Life spent in the midst of five fires, or one devoted to charitable deeds like giving away of worldly possessions,
The observance of *Niyoli Karm** and many other yogic postures as enjoined by Jain scriptures,
And even a holocaust of one's body inch by inch,
All these and still more fail to purify the dirt of egoism;
Nothing comes up to the merit of Naam,
O Nanak! a beloved of the Master saves himself through communion with the Naam.
Even the desire to die at a sacred place does not rid one of his egoism,
All efforts to purify the body cannot sanctify the mind,
All physical practices cannot drive away the mental impurities,
All the methodical washings of the body cannot wash clean the clay-house.

*One of the *Shat Karma* or six acts in Hatha Yoga, in which the breath is held inside and the bowels are made to move both sides, right and left, so as to clear away waste matter from them.

The Power of Naam far transcends all of these,
O Nanak! it has saving grace even for the worst of sinners.[30]

GURU ARJAN

The Vedas, the Smritis and all other sacred scriptures unanimously proclaim that besides Naam there is no other Sadhan for spiritual advancement; all else is mere idle talk.[31]

GURU ARJAN

Nanak has the riches of Naam to dole out.[32]

GURU ARJAN

Nanak and Kabir both taught the science of the Naam,
And I too have manifested Naam within me,
Dhru and Prahlad were intoxicated with the elixir of Naam,
And Lord Siva too is ever engaged in meditating on Naam.

DULAN DAS

The world reveres those who have sought the path of the Naam for Naam can transform sinners into saints, for it ennobles and purifies:

By practicing the science of inversion, one becomes world famous,

Even Valmik, a well known highwayman,
acquired the status of a Brahm.

TULSI DAS

The lovers of God are ever engaged in the practice of the Word:

Whether awake or asleep and in whatever condition,
O Nanak! while doing everything they remain contacted within.[33]

GURU ARJAN

In the scriptures of all the religions, there are references to the Power of the Word:

All the religions are deeply rooted in the Naam,
There is no religion higher than that of the Naam.[34]

The practice of the Naam is the noblest of all virtues.[35]

GURU ARJAN

Devotion to Naam is the only true worship

The significance of Naam (the true devotion of God) cannot be put in words:

Rare indeed is the devotion to Naam (or Hari),

> We cannot do full justice to the greatness of Naam.[36]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

Naam alone is immaculate and everything else is of no consequence. What then can we give in offering?

> But we are all as an unclean thing,
> And all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.[37]
>
> ISAIAH

Whatever we say and utter in praise of Naam is inadequate. The entire mankind is indeed engaged in singing praises of Naam and in the performance of devotional exercises. But as all this is being done on the intellectual level and on the plane of the senses, it does not bear any appreciable fruit. A rare soul here and there, who is born anew through Naam or the Power of God, is truly immaculate. Only such a devotion is acceptable at His Court. There is no other devotion like that. Such a soul always cries out:

> Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.[38]
>
> THE PSALMS

The Bible tells us,

> The Word of God is quick (living) and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and

marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and interests of the heart.[39]

As we do not know what Naam is and its true significance; we live as if in a dome of many-colored glass which by its bewildering effect deludes the senses. All our prayers are but a confused jargon, and our words, though loud and strong, vanish into thin air and yield no results.

Everyone does worship but on the sensual plane only, and so gets no results,
But absorption in the Naam purifies the mind and bears fruit in abundance,
Those who are devotees of the Naam are truly pure and beloved of the Lord,
But for Naam all other worship goes in vain, and the people at large are deluded.
The beloved of the Master (Gurumukh) knows himself by coming in contact with the all-pervading Word (Naam).
The Immaculate Lord Himself becoming the guide contacts the soul with the Sound Current,
Those who worship with no proper guidance, remain wandering in the realm of duality,
A devotee of the Master alone knows the Path and bows before His Will.[40]

GURU AMAR DAS

Naam is the great Controlling Power

> By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them . . . He spake and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.[41]
>
> THE PSALMS

> Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.[42]
>
> CHRIST

Naam or Word is the chief Controlling Power. It is the only support that one can have either in this world or in the next:

> I need no obsequies after my death,
> I depend wholly on Sat Naam, the maker of all, and pervading all, here and hereafter.[43]
>
> GURU NANAK

Naam is beginningless and endless. It is invariable and Unchanging Permanence, ancient and eternal.

> Leaving aside all thy learning and cunning, worship the Great Formless beyond Brahm.
>
> Except the Naam all others fall away.[44]
>
> GURU ARJAN

> Excepting the True Naam, the rest is all trash. Four things alone are eternal and lasting: Naam or Sound Current; Sadhu or a disciplined soul well established in Word; Guru or Word-personified, with a divine commission to contact others with the Naam; and lastly, Gobind or the Lord God — the Eternally Formless One.[45]
>
> GURU TEG BAHADUR

Everything is within the Controlling Power of Naam:

> Naam is just a pure gift from God;
> He alone may get the gift through the Guru, to whomsoever He may grant it,
> O Nanak! all is within the mighty grip of the Naam,
> He alone is blessed with Word, who may be so ordained.[46]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

Naam is the Great Master Force

Word or Naam is the Sound Current or Sound Principle. This current or principle lay merged in the Great Silence and was hence nameless. There was then nothing but Deep Silence with no name or pattern, no design or form and no color or shade. The life vibration (principle) hidden therein, stirred the Great Deep and there came a

Great Sound called Word, and the whole creation came into being and is being sustained by this. With the withdrawal of the Naam or Sound there sets in disintegration and decay in all that lives, with consequent putrefaction, and the result is dissolution which in common parlance is known as death. Thus this Sound is at once the beginning and the end of all that exists:

> He — the Nameless — expressed Himself
> and made the Naam or Word.[47]
>
> GURU NANAK

It is called variously as Sound, Sruti (that which is heard), Shabd, or Akash Bani (voice from the heaven), Udgit, Sraosha (music of the beyond), Word or Harmony, Logos or the Holy Spirit, Kalma or Bang-i-Ilahi (call from God), or Nida-i-Asmani (heavenly sound).

> Thou manifested Thyself as Naam and set
> up the creation.
> Out of the Formless proceeded forms in
> varying degrees.[48]
>
> GURU NANAK

This entire extensionalism is just of the Naam and there is nothing which is not of Him:

> Thou art immanent in all;
> And nothing is where Thy Word is not.[49]
>
> GURU NANAK

Again,

> All that is of life and all that is of matter
> is from the Naam (whether visible or
> invisible);
> Without a Master-soul one cannot have
> contact with the Naam. [50]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

It may here be necessary to describe in brief the four Grand Divisions of the Universe. These Grand Divisions are:

(i) Sach Khand or the region of Sat Naam: This region is of pure spirit unalloyed by matter.

(ii) Par Brahm: Here spirit and subtle form of matter combine in varying degrees, yet spirit is the ruling force.

(iii) Brahmand: Where spirit and matter in its gross form combine. Here the spirit, for its manifestation, has to depend on matter. It consists of Trikuti and Sahasrar (Und).

(iv) Pind or the physical plane: Where the spirit lies dormant under a heap of matter in its grossest form.

Naam or Word is both the Creator and the Sustainer of the Universe:

The Naam or Word is the Power of God
that has created the Universe,
The same Power is sustaining all by its
immanence in every form.[51]

GURU RAM DAS

Everything comes into being and lives by
the Naam or Power of God,
Forgetting the Naam, we breathe hollow.[52]

GURU AMAR DAS

Upholding all things by the Word of His
Power.[53]
And He is before all things, and by Him all
things consist.[54]

ST. PAUL

By the Word of the Lord were the heavens
made,
And all the host of them . . . for He spake,
and it was done;
He commanded, and it stood fast.[55]

THE PSALMS

Through faith we understand that the
worlds were framed by the Word of
God . . .[56]

ST. PAUL

By the Word of God the heavens were of
old, and the earth standing out of the
water . . . But the heavens and the earth

which are now, by the same Word are
kept in store . . .[57]

ST. PETER

Word is at once the Creator and the
Sustainer of the Universe.
Word transcends all forms and all names,
They who worship the Word, alone live.[58]

Word sustains the entire creation,
He is the Kernel in every shell.[59]

GURU ARJAN

John Dryden, in his song for St. Cecilia's Day (1687), refers to it as Harmony:

From Harmony, from heavenly Harmony,
This Universal frame began;
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head
The tuneful voice was heard from high
Arise, Ye more than dead!
From Harmony, from heavenly Harmony
This Universal frame began:
From Harmony to Harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

Word or Naam is the great Progenitor or the Primeval Cause of the entire creation with the various divisions high and low. We have the testimony of Guru Arjan in this behalf:

Naam is the life-principle in all that lives,
Naam is the foundation-stone of the
Cosmos with its divisions.
Naam is the Creator of Heavens and nether
lands,
Naam is the Manifester of all forms.
Naam is the sub-strata of all regions,
Naam is the liberator from all bondage.[60]

The various Khandas or planes exist because of Naam and different Yugas or classifications of time owe their origin to Naam:

> There is but one source of the different divisions of time and Universe. This has been revealed to me by the Master-soul. Naam is a great storehouse of all that one may wish for. Why then should I move out for this or that? [61]
>
> GURU ARJAN

Naam: What it is

All scriptures speak of Naam but have not been able to say adequately what It is. It is impossible to define and delineate It in words. It may be described as "life-impulse" or "conscious-principle." When It begins to vibrate, It produces melodious sound, which is termed Naam or Shabd. This Sound Current proceeding from the Deep Silence of the Formless Kutasth is responsible for all forms and colors, visible and invisible to the naked eye. All life hangs on this life-principle. No

life can exist with out Naam. The Sound-principle is all-pervading; It may or may not be felt, yet It is reverberating from top to toe. It is the Kernel and the Essence and at once both the material and efficient Cause of the endless universes in which this physical earth is but a speck.

O Pipa! this universal vibration is the
Primal Causeless Cause,
But can be apprehended only through a
Master-soul.

RAJA PIPA

In all religions God is spoken of as the Sound-manifest or Life Principle. It is a current, live and conscious, and has in It the germs of creation. It is because of this link between the Creator and the creation that the spirit or soul of a person can cross over the physical body and traverse the spiritual regions to reach the True Home of our Father — Sach Khand.

From scriptures we learn that Sound Principle or Naam is of two kinds: (i) outer, and (ii) inner. The former consists of words that may be spoken or written down and recorded. This constitutes all learning and knowledge at the intellectual level and is termed *Apra Vidya* or knowledge of the world and the worldly surroundings. All worldly wisdom is included therein. It is also called *Varn-Atmak*, for with it Atma or Soul can express itself and functions in the world. All book knowledge is because of Varn-Atmak Shabd. Compre-

hension of world and worldly relations depends on this type of Shabd which helps outwardly in the physical plane. It serves as the means of conveying ideas and emotions from man to man, just as any other animal would do. Outer sound then, serves as the first step in the study of the Science of the Spirit. Theory precedes practice and the Master-saint has to make use of it for explaining this most abstruse subject. Again Japa or oral repetition of certain words or names of God is to be done by Varn-Atmak Shabd. The preliminary training of the mind is the first essential on this Path and hence the need for outer sound or Shabd. Japa is of four kinds:

(i) Baikhri or oral, performed by tongue.
(ii) Madhma, done mentally at the seat of the Shakti in the Kanth or throat.
(iii) Pashianti, done at the seat of the heart.
(iv) Para, also a mental process performed with attention riveted at the seat of the navel.

All these types of Japas give solace of varying degrees, and one gets peace of mind of a temporary nature only because the various bodily ganglions involved in them are of a lower order, situated below Shiv-Netra or the Third Eye.

Besides these, there is Simran or Japa of the indescribable and hidden Sound Current that proceeds of Itself from the depths of the Great Silence. It is technically termed *Para-Vidya* (Knowledge

of the Beyond) or *Dhun-Atmak Shabd*. In this type of Japa one has just to listen to the all-pervading Naam or Shabd. As this Sound cannot be expressed in any symbolic form, it is expressionless. It may be contacted above the sensory plane, behind the center of the two eyebrows. The true significance of Naam, the Creator of various planes and divisions of the endless universes, may be known by one who is an adept in the Surat Shabd Yoga or has united his soul with the Sound-principle.

> He who performs Japa with the tongue of thought, knows the true nature of the Sound Current (Word or Naam).[62]
>
> GURU NANAK

No doubt Dhun-Atmak Shabd is the very essence of one's soul, but one cannot apprehend It without the help and guidance of a Master-soul or adept in the line, and without Surat Shabd Yoga, i.e., establishing a contact of the spirit or soul with the essential live-principle (through a regular process of inversion or self-analysis).

One does not get life's richest gift; for the spirit is engaged all the time in outer pursuits by constant association with the mind and the senses, reveling in the enjoyment of the world and worldly objects. Emerson, the great American philosopher, speaks of inversion as "tapping inside."

Lord Jesus metaphorically speaks of it:

> Knock and it shall be opened unto you.[63]

Naam or Name is *Varn-Atmak*, while *Naami* or Named is the Great Power behind the descriptive words and is *Dhun-Atmak*. From epithetic words, one has to recede to the Power which the words denote and stand for. The Japa or Varn-Atmak is performed orally by the tongue and is just a preparatory course in the spiritual discipline of the soul. Sant Ravi Das says in this context:

> Without actual sight (of an object) longing
> does not arise.
> Whatever is visible to the naked eyes is
> perishable indeed,
> He who establishes an inner contact of
> Surat and Shabd (Spirit and Sound)
> through the help of Varn-Atmak words,
> is a true Yogi, desireless and free.[64]

Varn-Atmak or epithetic names look just like dolls apparently dancing by themselves; but they in fact are being made to dance by invisible hands controlling the lines behind them. In exactly the same way there exist infallible links between Naam and the Naami (or the Name and the Named: Varn-Atmak and Dhun-Atmak Shabds). Varn Atmak words pave the way to Dhun-Atmak Shabd and are thus essential aids in stilling the mind of oscillations, purging it of all impurities, and rendering it capable of apprehending the

Dhun-Atmak current within. For without this vital chord, the spirit cannot transcend the physical plane and enter the higher spiritual planes leading to the Home of our Father.

The Varn-Atmak words may and do differ because of lingual differences, but the Dhun-Atmak Shabd being the Life-Principle of the spirit or soul is the same throughout. It has indeed been an Unspoken Language and an Unwritten Law throughout the ages, and it shall remain so till eternity; for all life is one and one only for the entire creation, though it is in multitudinous forms.

The teachings of the Saints which center round the One Reality are, therefore, a common heritage for the entire humanity and not for this or that class or social order or religious sect. The Saints are secular in their outlook and not sectarian. Children of Light, they give light to one and all, irrespective of caste and creed. God made man (an embodied spirit) and man made religions and is caught in his own handiwork just like a silkworm in his cocoon. The Saints come to liberate man from his own self-made bondage, to take him out of the narrow grooves which he has molded himself through centuries of habitual way of living. The Saints do not meddle with social orders nor do they create any. Their call is addressed to the spirit alone. They come with a divine mandate:

To lead man from Darkness to Light, from Untruth to Truth, from Death to Immortality.
Arise, awake and stop not until the goal is reached.

THE VEDAS

Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.[65]

CHRIST

Again,

For them (saints) there is no difference between the so-called twice-born: the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas and the low-born Sudras, for they address them all alike.

The beloved of the Master (Gurmukh) worships the Naam and attains Moksha (liberation) — the Naam which, O Nanak! pervades equally in all.[66]

GURU ARJAN

In the life story of Guru Nanak we find the anecdote of Mian Mitha, a fakir of Mithankot, a town in the Punjab (now in West Pakistan). In his wanderings, Guru Nanak came across this fakir and told him that without Naam or Word one found no peace here and hereafter and could not escape from the Karmic bondage. As to what this Naam or Word was, he said that it was not a subject of

comprehension by the senses, but it could be apprehended on a super-sensual plane. The Guru asked Mian Mitha to listen within himself, but the Mian could hear nothing. Thereupon the Guru took him aside and looking intently at him asked him once again to attune himself within, whereupon the Mian exclaimed that he could distinctly feel the vibrations of Naam in every pore of his body. This shows that the Word of God is characterized not by words but by vital vibrations.

> A beloved of the Master feels and
> experiences the quickening of life-
> impulse in all the pores of his body.[67]
>
> GURU NANAK

The Saints, therefore, in common, say that God is one, and there is only one way that leads Godward. The spiritual discipline does not interfere with nationality or social religion. Every person, whatever his nationality or religion, can practice this discipline and successfully follow the Path of the Saints. The Divine Link or Word is already present in each individual, no matter who he is and whatever his vocation in life. It is attained by a process of self-analysis and inversion, and one who learns and practices this process can come into contact with It. But the trouble is that everyone clings to the age old convictions and is not prepared to break away from them and accept ideas which appear new and novel. But

by constant association with a Godman or a man of realization, the Light of Truth gradually dawns upon him, and in course of time he begins to realize the Truth.

Naam is the Sound Principle

Naam is characterized by a sweet and serene Sound Current. This Ethereal Music is going on in each individual. In fact, there is no place without It. Its Divine notes can be heard through the grace of some Master of Divine Music or Master-soul. All the scriptures of the world make pertinent references to this heavenly Harmony.

God manifested Himself as Naam — the ever reverberating Naam,
The Vedas, Shastras and Smritis sing of Naam, times without number.[68]

GURU ARJAN

The Naam (Sound-principle) reverberating as It is in all hearts, does not diminish or increase and is Unchanging Permanence,
Without Naam all are just paupers, and this Truth comes only from a Master-soul.[69]

Hearing the Naam one becomes the knower of the Self, and gets all that is good and noble,

Hearing the Naam all sins drop off of themselves and one easily gets at the Truth,
O Nanak! by hearing the Naam, one's face shines with glory,

The beloved of the Master is ever in contact with the Naam. [70]

GURU NANAK

Then the Eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the Ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the Lame man leap as an hart, and the Tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.[71]

ISAIAH

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.[72]

ST. PAUL

The Seat of Naam or Word

The body is the Temple of God, for God made man in His own image. But it is only after the spirit, through the process of inversion, gets concentrated between and behind the two eyebrows that one can hear the divine melody. Guru Nanak, when questioned by the yogins (those engaged

in yogic exercises like Pranayam, etc.) about this music, told them:

> O yogi, you may have the gift of the Divine Link only if you transcend the body.[73]

This Divine Link is essentially musical in character and has a great magnetic force which pulls the Spirit upward to spiritual realms, as Spirit, Word and God are of the same essence. When like attracts like, the Spirit is irresistibly drawn out of the bodily raiment. Maulana Rumi therefore says:

> If I were to give thee a little account of the divine strains, all the spirits would leave their respective bodily abodes.

Christ too speaks of it:

> When the dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, they that hear shall live.[74]

This heavenly Harmony is already within each one of us, and we could distinctly hear it if we could by leaving the outgoing faculties through repetition of certain name or names, withdraw the spirit from the sensory plane. The reverberations of this music make us self-absorbed and self-intoxicated.

> One dyed in the Naam is ever absorbed within and gets eternal bliss. [75]
>
> GURU NANAK

All the intoxicants of the world produce but a passing inebriation and a momentary forgetfulness; but a spirit dyed in the color of Naam or Word is ever-engrossed in the Sound Principle, arising from the Deep Silence of the Soul, and experiences an everlasting bliss which is interminable:

> The intoxication of the Naam, O Nanak,
> works round the clock.
>
> GURU NANAK

Naam is the Life Principle that works through all that lives, and its withdrawal means disintegration, dissolution and death:

> I live when I listen to Naam's music and I
> die when I forget it.[76]
>
> GURU NANAK

Again,

> O my Beloved, I do live when I contact the
> Naam,
> Without that there is no life, my Master
> has instilled this in me.[77]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

So long as this inner contact of the spirit with the Naam, which is latent in each one of us, is not established, there is no way out for the spirit and it gets no peace.

Time for practicing spiritual disciplines

One may devote oneself to the worship of Naam or Word at any time and at any place for there are no restrictions in this behalf. But Amrit-Vela (early dawn) is the most appropriate and fruitful for the purpose.

> At the ambrosial hour of the early dawn,
> Be ye in communion with the divine Word,
> And meditate on His glory.[78]
>
> GURU NANAK

Again,

> O thou rise early, and worship the Word day and night, and then, O Nanak, thou shalt have no grief and escape from all troubles.[79]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

Why is Naam inaudible?

Our mind is ever in a state of oscillation. It is covered with the dust of ages upon ages. All the time our mental faculties are flowing outward into the world, and never for a moment have they known any rest. Until the mind is purified and stilled, one cannot listen to the reverberations of the Sound Current.

> There can be no devotion with an unclean mind, for one cannot have access to the Sound Current,

A man dwelling on the plane of the senses,
dies in the senses and loses all respect
here and hereafter.[80]

GURU AMAR DAS

Again,

Oscillating between this and that on
account of egoistic life, the mind
gets lost and finds neither charm nor
interest in the Sound Current.[81]

GURU AMAR DAS

Naam is a subjective experience

Naam in the real sense is beyond perception, comprehension and apprehension. It is an unspoken language and mutely it speaks. Madam Blavatsky calls It the Voice of the Silence. A continual touch with the Word helps in stilling the mental vibrations and quieting the mind. Guru Nanak speaks of It:

Naam cannot be seen with the eyes, nor
can it be comprehended, but with all
this, it is so sweet and so loving,
O God! grant Nanak this ambrosial nectar
from age to age, so that he may ever be
engaged in its limitless vibrations.[82]

Real Naam: Incomprehensible and hidden

The real essence of Naam is all-pervading in each individual and is yet hidden and unfelt. It can be made manifest through the grace of a Master-soul who is established in the Naam, or in other words is Naam-personified and capable of transmitting to others his own life-impulse.

In the present age, the Unmanifested
Naam reigns supreme, and is surging in
abundance in each individual,
It, however, becomes manifest in such
hearts as take refuge at the lotus feet of
a Master-soul.[83]

GURU AMAR DAS

In this world, one can have each and every thing one may desire; but the Unmanifested Word is too difficult to be achieved. It is the heritage of one who is a Gurmukh or established in the Master-soul.

Hari Naam is a very rare commodity,
It may grow in the heart of some Guru-
man.[84]

The whole world is devoid of Naam,
Yet it may be obtained from a Guru-man.[85]

GURU AMAR DAS

Naam:
Divine link between man and his maker

The Controlling Power of Naam has within its mighty grasp the endless series of universes. Human body too has been designed on the model of Cosmic Order. This microcosm made up of diverse elements likewise owes its integrity and organic unity to Naam. It is the indissoluble link between God and man. Just as a fish can ride a mighty wave, so a spirit can ride the Sound Current and reach the Sea of Sound or Naam. The Path of Sound Principle is known as a process of inversion. All other paths lead to extensionalism, with no way out of the panorama of life.

> Whoever gets linked with Naam, he alone,
> O Nanak, can realize the Immaculately
> Pure.[86]
>
> GURU ARJAN

The Path of Naam leads to Sehaj State

Naam helps a spirit in the attainment of Sehaj — a state of perfect equipoise beyond the realm of the three Gunas: (Satvik, Rajsik and Tamsik, i.e., Equanimity, Action, and Inertia respectively). It is a state not subject to decay and disintegration.

> Let the Beloved of Nanak have mercy on
> him for Naam is the blind man's staff
> unto him.[87]
>
> GURU ARJAN

O God! Thy Name is a pilgrim's staff to the blind,
To me who is a poor and helpless wretch,
Thy name is my prop and support.[88]

NAM DEV

Naam:
The most efficacious Sadhna in the present age

Whenever vice predominates and virtue goes underground and good acts are altogether ignored, the Saints preach the spiritual sadhna or practice of Naam, for it is the easiest and the quickest remedy. In this age all individual and social acts and the performance of rites and rituals as enjoined by the scriptures are hardly of any substantial use for they are outmoded and out of time.

In this age, *Kirtan* (the Sound Principle) occupies the highest place (among spiritual practices).[89]

GURU ARJAN

Sant Ravi Das testifies to this:

In *Sat Yuga* (the golden age) "Sat" or Truth reigned supreme; in *Treta* (the silver age) sacrificial oblations had their day; in *Dwaper* (the copper age) idol worship was the law of the land; but in *Kal Yuga* (the iron age), Naam is the most potent and sovereign remedy.[90]

Swami Tulsi Das Ji concurs:

> Meditation (on the Sat) prevailed in the first unit of time, Yajnas or sacrifices in the second, Bhakti or loving devotion in the third and now in the fourth when evil is in the ascendant and the mind is wholly engrossed in evil like a fish in the sea, Naam or the discipline of the spirit works as the saving life line from the ocean of delusive matter.
>
> TULSI DAS

> In Kal Yuga Naam is the only precious thing, for with the help of Naam, the devotees are saved.[91]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

> In this Kal Yuga, all Sadhans or practices are of no avail except that of Naam, for it alone is a potent remedy.[92]
>
> SWAMI SHIVDAYAL SINGH

> In Kal Yuga, Naam is the only means of salvation.[93]
> Now that Kal Yuga has set in, it is the most appropriate season for sowing the seed of Naam,
> Nothing else can bear fruit now, do not be in any delusion on this account.[94]
> Nanak would gladly make an offering of himself to one who has been linked with Naam.[95]
>
> GURU ARJAN

Naam: The saving factor in all the four ages

The Path of the Naam is the most ancient and the most natural. It is in consonance with the Divine Law. In all the four ages, it has acted as a saving lifeline for the people. During the last five hundred years, saints like Kabir Sahib, Guru Nanak, and the other nine Sikh Gurus, Dadu Sahib, Paltu Sahib, Tulsi Sahib, Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Baba Jaimal Singh and Baba Sawan Singh have been the great exponents of this Path. The Muslim divines have been practicing and preaching the Path of Kalma for fourteen hundred years or more. The Prophet Mohammed, Shamas Tabrez, Maulana Rumi, Hafiz Sahib, Moinuddin Chishti and others taught this very thing. Again, two thousand years ago, John the Baptist and Christ laid down the Path of the Word or Logos. Zoroaster long before preached of Sraosha or the Sound Current in Persia. Lord Buddha, twenty-five hundred years ago, practiced this very sadhna. The teachings of Gorakh Nath, long before Buddha, centered round this cardinal principle. Four thousand years back, we find that in Egypt it was known as the "Path of Aton" which was preached by King Ikhnaton. In the Upanishads we find references to "Udgit" or the "Harmony" of the Beyond. Lord Krishna, long before, was fully conversant with this science. In the Vedas, the oldest scriptures of the world, we read in Wak Devi Sukat of "Naad" or music and "Sruti" or that which is heard.

Kabir Sahib tells us that he came in all the four Yugas, and every time he preached of Naam or Word. In each Yuga he was known differently as Sat Sukrat, Munindar, Karunamae, and lastly as Kabir.

The Sikh scriptures testify in plain words that during the four Grand Divisions of time people benefited by the practice of Naam by sitting at the feet of saints:

> In all the four ages, Naam occupied a predominant position and people meditated on the Shabd. In this age, *Gurmukh* (Guru-man) alone is saved.[96]
>
> Whosoever benefited, he did so through Naam, obtained by the grace and the blessings of some Gurumukh (Master-soul).[97]
>
> Naam alone has been the Saving Life Line through the ages.[98]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

2. Evidence from Various Religions

If we go through the scriptures of various religions, we find clear references to the basic common factor, the Divine Light and Sound Current, as the only means for creation and maintenance of the universe and the regeneration of mankind.

HINDUISM

According to the Hindu theological books, the whole creation was made through Naad. They also refer to it as "Akash Bani" (voice coming down from the Heavens). We have references to it in the Vedas, the most ancient scriptures in the world. In the Naad Bind Upanishad, for instance, the subject is dealt with in a very lucid manner. The Hath Yog Pradipaka also speaks of this Sound Principle.

> He has taken the support of the Word (melodious tune).
>
> CHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

> Let yogi sit on *Sidh Asan* and while practicing the *Vaisnavi Mudra,* should hear the sound through his right ear.
> By communion with the Word, he will become deaf to the external sounds, and will attain the *Turya Pad* or a state of equipoise within a fortnight.
> First the murmuring sounds resembling those of the waves of the ocean, the fall of rain and the running rivulets and the *Bheri* will be heard intermingled with the sounds of bell and conch, etc.
>
> NAAD BIND UPANISHAD

Though He is beyond speech and mind,
yet one can experience and realize Him
by going beyond speech and mind.

BRAHM UPANISHAD

He is the Immutable, the Supreme and the
Self-luminous,
And knowing Him one transcends death;
there is no other way to freedom . . .
He is to be realized in the cave that
shines.

KAIVALYA UPANISHAD

Meditation on *Nad* or the Sound Principle
is the royal road to salvation.

HANSA NAAD UPANISHAD

Tejabind Upanishad conceives the Supreme Atman dwelling in the heart of man, as the most subtle center of effulgence, revealed only to yogins by super-sensuous meditation.

Now about the effulgent point: It has its excellent meditation, super-mundane, seated in the heart (attainable by) the Anava, Shakta and Shambhava (methods); the meditation is gross, subtle, as well as that which is transcendental.

It is the most difficult but the only process of Supreme Realization: Even to the wise and the thoughtful this meditation is difficult to perform, and difficult to attain, difficult to cognize, and difficult to abide in and difficult to cross.

> The seeker must therefore be one
> determined to make that which is
> inaccessible accessible, and one whose
> sole aim is to serve the Guru and
> His Cause only — the worship of the
> Supreme Spirit.
>
> TEJABIND UPANISHAD

After studying the Vedas, the intelligent one solely intent on acquiring knowledge and realization should discard the Vedas altogether as the man who seeks to obtain rice discards the husk.

> Like the butter hidden in milk, the Pure
> Consciousness resides in every being.
> That ought to be constantly churned out
> by the churning rod of the mind.
>
> AMRITBIND UPANISHAD

There occur, in the Upanishads, terms like "Trilochan" and "Tryambaka," referring to the one having three eyes — the third eye being the Single Eye of Christ or Divya Chakshu or the eye that is self-luminous.

Gosain Tulsi Das Ji, the famous author of the Hindi Ramayana, speaks of it as follows:

> The nails of the Master's feet are more
> lustrous than the shining crest jewel.
> A concentration on them opens the
> inner vision and one becomes all
> knowing.

BUDDHISM

Extracts from "The Path of Sudden Attainment" by Hui Hai (a scripture of Mahayana Buddhism) translated by John Blofeld:

> Nature of Perception: The faculty of perception is continuous, so perception takes place whether objects are present or not. Thus we know it is the objects themselves that come and go and not the faculty of perception. It is the same with all the senses.
>
> Nature of Hearing: It is not the question of whether there is sound or not. Because the faculty of hearing is continuous, so hearing takes place whether there is sound or not. It is the real nature of the "Self" as knower, that perceives and hears independently of the objects and sounds respectively and apart from the sense organs.
>
> Method of Enlightenment by sudden apprehension:
>
> Its purpose is to reach a state where thought is absent. Its scope lies in not allowing yourself to be moved by any form of allurement. Its nature is stillness and its activating agent is wisdom.
>
> Wisdom: Four kinds:
>
> (i) The five kinds of perception produce the "Wisdom of self-perception or self per-

fection." It consists in being able to use all the forces of perception without being thereby caused to believe in the plurality of form.

(ii) Apprehension produces the "Wisdom of profound discernment or observation." It consists in being able to enter into the sphere of all forms of perception and to be proficient in making distinctions between them without allowing disorderly thoughts to arise and thus achieving freedom from illusion.

(iii) Discrimination produces "Universal Wisdom." It consists in being able to regard every single atom without feeling love and hatred and implies the voidness of distinction.

(iv) Next comes the basis of all perception which produces the "Perfect All-reflecing Buddha Wisdom." It is Absolute Void and Stillness, Perfect and *Unwavering Brilliance.*

Spiritual Experiences of Highest Bodhisattvas — Extracts taken from The Surangama Sutra — From "A Buddhist Bible" edited by Dwight Goddard (E.P. Dutton & Co.):

. . . Thereupon, the Blessed Lord revealed to the assembled highest *Bodhisattva-Maha-*

sattvas and great *Arhats* free from all intoxicants, this most sacred teaching. He said:

"Honored Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas and great Arhats! You have now been under my instruction for a long time and have attained to perfect emancipation. As an introduction to what I am about to say, I want to enquire of each of you as to how you attained *Samadhi*. When you began to realize in the early stages of your devotion and practice the falseness of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects by the sense organs,* which one of the spheres first became thoroughly enlightened, by means of which you attained to Samadhi?"

. . . Then Maha-Kasyapa with the *Bhikshuni* Suvarna and other nuns of his spiritual family, rose from their seats and bowed down to the Lord Buddha saying:

Blessed Lord! In previous *Kalpas* when Buddha Kandrasuryapradipa was living, I served him faithfully and listened to his teaching and practiced it faithfully. After he

*The eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects by the sense organs are as follows, in the case of sight.

(a) Organ of sight.
(b) Object of sight.
(c) Consciousness of sight, which results from the contact of the organ of sight with the object.

Hence a, b and c in regard to all the six senses (Cognition — Sight— Hearing — Smell — Taste and Touch) add up to 18.

passed into *Nirvana*, I continued to make offerings to his sacred relics and kept his image freshly gilded, so that his teaching, like a lamp, continued to illumine my life by its brightness. By my faithful reverence for his relics and his image, my mind was illumined by a purple-golden brightness that reflected itself in all my following lives and became a permanent purple-golden brightness with my body.

Then Sariputra rose from his seat and bowing down before the Lord Buddha, said:

Blessed Lord! Since many Kalpas, as many as the sands of the Ganges, my mind has continued its purity and because of it, there have been many pure rebirths. As soon as my eyes perceived the differences in the ever-flowing process of changes, both in this world and in the Way of Emancipation, my mind immediately understood them, and because of it, I acquired the attainment of perfect freedom. When I was on the road one day, I met the brother Kasyapa who kindly explained the principle of the Lord's teaching that everything rose from causes and conditions and, therefore, was empty and transitory, and I realized the infinitude of *Pure Mind Essence.* From that time, I followed my Lord and my perception of mental sight became transcendental and

perfectly enlightened, so that I instantly acquired an attainment of great fearlessness and confidence. Because of it I attained to the degree of Arhat and became, in fact, the first Prince of my Lord Buddha, begotten by the Lord's true words and nourished and transformed by his intrinsic *Dharma.* In reply to my Lord's enquiry as to our first experience of attainment, I would answer that my first thorough accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects through the sense-organs, was by reason of the transcendent brightness within my own mind whose shining beams illuminated my intelligence and reached as far as my insight could penetrate. . . .

Then Samantabhadra rose from his seat and bowing down to the Lord, said:

I became a Prince of my Lord's Dharma many long Kalpas ago, and all of the innumerable *Tathagatas* of the ten quarters of the Universe, taught their disciples, who had the qualifications for becoming Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas, to practice the devotion of Samantabhadra's unceasing compassion for all sentient beings for his name's sake. The transcendental and intrinsic hearing of my *Essential Mind* became very pure and transparent, so that I could use it to discriminate the understanding and ideas

of all sentient beings. Should there be any sentient beings in whatever quarter of the Universe — past, present or future — to develop the devotion of Samantabhadra's unceasing compassion within his mind, I would become aware of its vibrations through the transcendental sensitiveness of my hearing and I would thereupon ride to them on the mysterious elephant of six tusks, in a hundred thousand different manifestations of my likeness, at the same time, to attend upon them each in his own place. Whatever might be his hindrances, however deep or serious, able to appreciate my presence or not, I would be near him to lay my hand upon his head, to give him encouragement and support, peacefulness and comfort, so that he might accomplish his supreme attainment. As my Lord has enquired of us as to our first attainment of accommodating our eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with sense-objects through our sense organs, I would say that in my case it was through the intrinsic hear ing of my *Essential Mind* and its spontaneous understanding and response.

Then Purna Metaluniputra rose from his seat and bowed down to the feet of the Lord Buddha, saying:

Blessed Lord! For an infinity of Kalpas I have had great freedom in preaching the Dharmas of emptiness and suffering and because of it have realized my own *Essence of Mind.* In the course of my preaching, I have interpreted profoundly and wonderfully the many Dharma Doors, with great confidence and with no feeling of fear, everywhere, and before great assemblies. Because of my eloquence, my Lord has encouraged me to make use of it in propagating the Dharma by means of the wheel of my voice. Since these ancient days, since the Lord has been among us, I have offered my services in turning the Dharma wheel, and have lately attained to the degree of *Arhat* by means of the development of my hearing, by reason of which I am conscious of the *Transcendental Sound* of the Dharma reverberating like the *roar of a lion.* Consequently, my Lord has honored me by regarding me as the greatest preacher of his *Mysterious Dharma.*

As my Lord has enquired of us which was our earliest accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects through sense organs, I would answer that my first thorough accommodation of mentation was the subjugation of my internal attachment and enemies

and the extermination of all intoxicants by means of the *Intrinsic Sound* of the *Mysterious Dharma.*

Then the great Maudgalyana rose fom his seat and bowed to the Lord Buddha, saying:

Blessed Lord! When I was begging on the road, I met the three Kasyapa brothers who taught me the Lord Tathagata's profound principle of causes and conditions. I was greatly influenced by the teaching and very soon acquired and realized particularly clear intelligence. My Lord was so kind as to bestow on me the true robe for my true body, my beard and head were shaved and I became a follower of my Lord. Since then my transcendental powers have become wonderfully devoloped. I have made visits to all the ten quarters of the Universe, without hindrance by space, passing instantly from one *Buddha-land* to another without being conscious of how it was done. I thus attained the degree of Arhat and was accounted by all and by my Lord Tathagata as being highest among the disciples in perfect enlightenment, great purity of mind, spontaneity and fearlessness in manifestation of transcendental powers.

As my Lord has enquired of us which was our most perfect accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects through the sense organs, I would answer that my first perfect accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation was my mind becoming abstracted in *tranquil reflection* that mysteriously developed its enlightening brightness, as if my mind that had been a muddy stream had suddenly become clear and transparent like a crystal ball.

Then the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Akshobya rose from his seat and bowed to the feet of the Lord Buddha, saying:

Blessed Lord! My Lord Tathagata and I had already acquired a *transcendental body of infinitude* at the time, long ago during the advent of the Buddha *Camatha-prabasha.* At that time, I had in possession four precious pearls having the transcendental penetrating power of the Element of Fire, by reason of which everything was luminously clear to my intuitive insight, even to the farthermost *Buddha-lands* of the most remote Universe. In the light of these magic pearls everything became as empty and transparent as Pure Space. Moreover, within my mind, there manifested a great mirror that was marvelously self illuminating that

radiated ten kinds of wonderful, glorious, far-reaching rays as the infinitude of all-embracing space. In this marvelous mirror were reflected all the royal continents of the Blessed, and like the mingling of different-colored lights, merged with my body into pure brightness and clarity of infinite space, there being no hindrance to their entrance or passing. By this magical power, I was able to enter into all the *Buddha-lands* and engage in all their *Buddha-services* of adoration with great ease and perfect accommodation. This transcendental power was due to my deep intuitive insight into the source of the *Four Great Elements,* by reason of which I was able to see that they were nothing but the appearing and disappearing of false imaginations, which were intrinsically as empty as pure space and with no more differentiation as pure space. And I realized that all the innumerable *Buddha-lands* within and without the mind were of the same inconceivable purity. From this intuitive insight I consequently acquired the Samadhi of perseverance of non-rebirth.

As my Lord has enquired of us which was our most thorough accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects through the sense organs, I would answer that in my case it was through

my perfect intuitive insight into the infinity of open space as illumined by the Element of Fire, and by that power I attained to the highest Samadhi and the transcendental power of *Samapatti.*

Then the Prince of the Lord's Dharma, Vejuria, rose from his seat and bowed down to the feet of the Lord Buddha and said:

Blessed Lord! I recall that many, many Kalpas ago there appeared in the world a Buddha called Amitayus, teaching all Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas the intuitive and essential nature of the wonderful *Essence of Mind,* and urging them to concentrate their minds on the essential sameness of *Samsara* World, and all sentient beings in it, that they were all alike manifestations of the Element of Wind (or Ether) and its rhythmic-vibrations revealing and manifesting all else. In my practice of *Dhyana,* I concentrated on this and reflected on how the great world was upheld in space, on how the great world was kept in perpetual motion, on how my body was kept in motion, moving and standing, on the rhythmic vibration of its life established and maintained by breathing, upon the movement of the mind, thoughts rising and passing. I reflected upon these various things and marvelled at their great sameness without any difference save in the

rate of vibration. I realized that the nature of these vibrations had neither any source for their coming nor destination for their going, and that all sentient beings, as numerous as the infinitesimal particles of dust in the vast spaces, were each in his own way topsy-turvy balanced vibrations, and that each and every one was obsessed with the illusion that he was a unique creation. All sentient beings, in all the three thousand Great *Chillicosms* are obsessed with this hallucination. They are like innumerable mosquitos shut up in a vessel and buzzing about in wildest confusion. Sometimes, they are roused to madness and pandemonium by the narrow limits of their confinement. After meeting my Lord Buddha, I attained to a state of *intuitive realization* and *non-rebirth perseverance,* whereupon my mind became enlightened and I was able to view the *Buddha-land of Immovability* in the *Eastern Heavens,* which is the *Pure Land* of Buddha Amitayus. I was acknowledged as a Prince of the Lord's Dharma and vowed to serve all Buddhas everywhere, and because of my enlightenment and great vow my body and mind became perfectly rhythmic and alive and sparkling, mingling with all other vibrations without hindrance to its perfect freedom.

As my Lord has enquired of us as to which was our first thoroughly perfect accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects through the sense-organs, I will say that in my case it was through my *intuitive insight* into the nature of the *Element of Ether,* and how by its balanced and rhythmic vibrations everything was embraced in perfect purity in the Enlightening Mind, and how concentrating my mind upon it I attained Samadhi and in that Samadhi I realized the perfect oneness of all the Buddhas in the purity of the *Wonderful Mind Essence,* that is the *Bliss-body of Buddhahood* . . .

Then Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya rose from his seat and bowing down to the Lord Buddha, said:

Blessed Lord! I recall that many, many Kalpas ago there was a Buddha appeared in this world called Chandra-suryapradipa-prabasha whom I followed as his disciple. At the time I was inclined to the worldly life and liked to associate with the nobility. The Lord Buddha, noticing it, instructed me to practice meditation, concentrating my mind on its consciousness. I followed his instructions and attained Samadhi. Since then I have served numberless other Buddhas using this same method, and by it have now

discarded all desire for worldly pleasures. By the time Buddha Dipankara appeared in the world, gradually I had attained to the supreme, wonderful, perfect Samadhi or *Transcendental Consciousness.* By this highest Samadhi I was conscious of infinite space, and realized that all of the *Tathagata-lands* whether pure or impure, existent or non-existent were nothing but the manifestation of my own mind. My Lord! because of my perfect realization that all such skillful devices of the *Tathagatas* were nothing but evolvements of my own mental consciousness, the essential nature of my consciousness flowed out in innumerable manifestations of Tathagatas, and I came to be selected as the next Coming Buddha, after my Lord Shakyamuni Buddha . . .

As my Lord has enquired of us as to our first perfect accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects through the sense organs, I answer that my first perfect accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation was by my perfect realization that all the ten quarters of the Universes were nothing but activities of my own consciousness. It was by that that my consciousness became perfectly enlightened and that the limits of my mind dissolved until it embraced all Reality for-

saking all prejudices of conditional and unconditional assertions and denials, I acquired *perfect non-birth perseverance* . . .

Then Maha-sthama-prapta, Prince of the Lord's Dharma, rose from his seat and bowed down to the feet of the Lord Buddha, together with the fifty-two members of his Brotherhood of Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas, and said:

Blessed Lord! I recall that in a past Kalpa long ago, as many Kalpas ago as there are grains of sand in the river Ganges, there appeared in this world a Buddha, called Amitabha-prabhasa Buddha, whose *Buddha-land* was in the *Eastern Heavens.* In that Kalpa there were twelve Tathagatas following each other in close succession, the last one being called Buddha-Chandra-surya-gomin, who taught me to practice meditation upon the name of Amitabha, saying: *Namo Amitabha-Buddhaya.* The value of this practice lay in this: so long as one practices his own method and another practices a different method, they balance off each other and meeting, it is just the same as not meeting. Whereas, if two persons practice the same method, their mindfulness would become deeper and deeper, and they would remember each other and develop affinities for each other life after life.

It is the same with those who practice concentration on the name of Amitabha — they develop within their minds Amitabha's spirit of compassion toward all sentient life. Moreover, whoever recites the name of Amitabha Buddha, whether in the present time or in the future time, will surely see the Buddha Amitabha and never become separated from him. By reason of that association, just as one associating with a maker of perfumes became permeated with the same perfumes, so he will become perfumed by Amitabha's compassion, and will become enlightened without any other expedient means.

Blessed Lord! My devotion to reciting the name of Amitabha had no other purpose than to return to my original nature of purity and by it I attained to the state of *non-rebirth perseverance.* Now in this life, I have vowed to teach my disciples to concentrate their minds by means of reciting the name of Amitabha *(Namo-Amitabha-Buddhaya)* and also I teach them to wish to be born in his *Land of Purity* and to make that their only Refuge.

As my Lord has asked us which is our first perfect accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects through sense organs, I answer that my

first perfect accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation was that I recognized no separation or differences among my six senses, but merged them into one *transcendental sense* from which arises the purity of *Transcendental Wisdom,* by reason of which I attained highest Samadhi and the graces of Samapatti.

Then the *Bodhisattva-Mahasattva* Avalokiteshvara rose from his seat and bowing down to the Lord Buddha said:

Blessed Lord! I recall that ages ago, as numerous as the sands of the river Ganges, that there was present in the world a Buddha, called Avalokiteshvara by whose instruction I was encouraged to begin seeking enlightenment. I was taught to begin practicing by concentrating my mind on the true nature of *Transcendental Hearing,* and by that practice I attained Samadhi. As soon as I had advanced to the stage of Entering the Stream, I determined to discard all thoughts discriminating as to where I was or had been. Later I discarded the conception of advancing altogether, and the thought of either activity or quietness in this connection did not again arise in my mind. Continuing my practice, I gradually advanced until all discrimination of

the hearing nature of my self-hood and of the *Intrinsic Transcendental Hearing* was discarded. As there ceased to be any grasping in my mind for the attainment of *Intrinsic Hearing*, the conception of enlightenment and enlightened nature were all absent from my mind. When this state of perfect *Emptiness of Mind* was attained, all arbitrary conceptions of attaining to *Emptiness of Mind* and of enlightened nature, were discarded. As soon as all arbitrary conceptions of rising and disappearing of thoughts were completely discarded, the state of Nirvana was clearly realized. Then all of a sudden, my mind became transcendental to both celestial and terrestrial world, and there was nothing in all the ten quarters but empty space, and in that state I acquired two wonderful transcendencies. The first was a "Transcendental Consciousness" that my mind was in perfect conformity with the *Essential, Mysterious Enlightening Mind,* of all the Buddhas in all the ten quarters, and also it was in like perfect conformity with the *Great Heart of Compassion* of all the Buddhas. The second transcendency was that my mind was in perfect conformity with the minds of all sentient beings of the *Six Realms* and felt with them the same earnestness and longing for deliverance.

Blessed Lord! because of my adoration for that Buddha, Avalokiteshvara, he taught me how to attain the *Diamond Samadhi* by the single method of concentrating my mind upon *Transcendental Hearing.* And, moreover, he helped me to attain the same compassionate capacity that all the Tathagatas had, by reason of which I attained the *thirty-two kinds of transformations* that are instantaneously available in response to the prayer for deliverance from any part of the world at any time.

These transformations have all been attained and exercised with perfect freedom and spontaneity in the mysterious *Diamond Samadhi* which I attained by concentrating my mind in the practice of Dhyana on the nature of *Transcendental Hearing.*

Blessed Lord! I have also, because of the mysterious powers that accompany the Diamond Samadhi, and because of my being in perfect conformity and with the same earnestness and longing for deliverance with all sentient beings, in the *Six Realms* of all the ten quarters of all the universes, past, present and future, been able to bestow upon all sentient beings the same *Fourteen kinds of Fearlessness,* which animate my own mind . . .

As my attainment to the original nature of perfect accommodations is wonderfully developed from the hearing organ to include all the sense-organs and discriminating mind, my body and mind profoundly and mysteriously embrace all the phenomenal world, so that if any disciple should recite my name, his blessing and merit would be like and equal to that of any Prince of the Lord's Dharma, whether he uses the same name or some other name. Blessed Lord! The reason why their merit is like and equal for one to recite my name, and for another to recite some other name, is because of my practice of Dhyana by which I acquired the True and Perfect accommodation.

Blessed Lord! This is what is meant by the *Fourteen kinds of Fearlessness* of Powers of Deliverance which bring blessing to all sentient beings. But in addition to the acquirement of perfect accommodation by means of my attainment of *Supreme Enlightenment,* I have also acquired another *Four kinds of inconceivable, wonderful Transcendencies of Spontaneity.*

The First is as it is, because when I first attained to my *Transcendental Hearing,* my mind became abstracted into its essential nature, and all the natural powers of hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, touching and

understanding attained to a state of pure, glorious, *enlightenment of perfect mutuality and accommodation in one perfect unity of Awareness.* Because of this, I have acquired this great *Transcendental Freedom,* so that when I give deliverance to sentient beings, I can transform myself into wonderful appearances . . .

Sometimes I appear in a form of kindness, or in a form of justice, or in a state of concentration, or in a state of intelligence. But in all I do it for the sake of deliverance and protecting of sentient beings so that they might acquire a like Great Freedom.

The Second inconceivable, wonderful *Transcendency of Spontaneity* is as it is because of my emancipation of hearing and thinking from the contaminations of the six sense-objects. It is as if sound were passing through walls without any hindrance. Thus I can skillfully transform into different kinds of appearances and recite different Dharanis, and can transform these appearances and recitation of Dharanis, to give the *Transcendental Power of Fearlessness* to sentient beings. Thus in all the countries of the ten quarters, I am known as the Giver of *Transcendental Power of Fearlessness.*

The Third inconceivable, wonderful *Transcendency of Spontaneity* is as it is, because of my practice upon the pure, original Essence of perfect accommodation, so that wherever I go, I lead sentient beings to willingness to sacrifice their lives and valuable possessions in order to pray for my compassion and mercy.

The Fourth inconceivable, wonderful *Transcendency of Spontaneity* is as it is, because of my acquirement of the Buddha's *Intrinsic Mind* and because of my attainment of the supremacy so that I can give all different kinds of offerings to all of the Tathagatas of all the ten quarters of the universes.

As my Lord has enquired of us as to what was our first perfect accommodation, of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects through the sense-organs, I answer that my first perfect accommodation was, when I attained to the state of perfectly accommodating reflection of Samadhi by means of my *Intrinsic Hearing* and *Transcendental Mental Freedom* from objective contaminations, so that my mind became abstracted and absorbed into the *Divine Stream,* and thus acquired the Diamond Samadhi and attained Enlightenment.

Blessed Lord! In those far off days, my Lord, the Buddha Avalokiteshvara, praised me for my skillful acquirement of the all-accommodating *Door of Dharma,* and in one of his great Assemblies, he announced that I, too, should be called Avalokiteshvara, "The hearer and answerer of Prayer," the Bodhisattva of *Tenderest Compassion.* As such, my *Transcendental Hearing* reaches to the ten quarters of all the universes, and the name of Avalokiteshvara prevails over all the extremes of human suffering and danger.

Manjusri's Summation:

Thereupon, the blessed Lord, sitting upon his throne in the midst of the Tathagatas and highest Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas from all the Buddha-lands, manifested his *Transcendent Glory* surpassing them all. From his hands and feet and body radiated supernal beams of light that rested upon the crowns of each Tathagata, Bodhisattva-Mahasattva, and Prince of the Dharma; in all the ten quarters of the universes, went forth rays of glorious brightness that converged upon the crown of the Lord Buddha and upon the crowns of all the Tathagatas, Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas and Arhats present in the assembly. At the same time all the trees of the Jeta Park, and all the waves lapping on

the shores of its lakes, were singing with the music of the Dharma, and all the intersecting rays of brightness were like a net of splendor set with jewels and over-reaching them all. Such a marvelous sight had never been imagined and held them all in silence and awe. Unwittingly, they passed into the blissful peace of the Diamond Samadhi and upon them all, there fell like a gentle rain, the soft petals of many different colored lotus blossoms — blue and crimson, yellow and white — all blending together and being reflected into the open space of heaven in all the tints of the spectrum. Moreover, all the differentiations of mountains and seas and rivers and forests of the Saha World blended into one another and faded away leaving only the flower-adorned unity of the Primal Cosmos, not dead and inert but alive with rhythmic life and light, vibrant with *transcendental sound of songs and rhymes*, melodiously rising and falling and merging and then fading away into silence.

Then the Lord Tathagata addressed Manjusri, Prince of the Dharma, saying:

Manjusri! You have now heard that these Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas of greatest and highest attainments have testified regarding the expedient means that were involved, and the results seen in spiritual graces and

powers of Samapatti, that followed in their devout lives and practices. Each one stated that the beginning was seen in the perfect accommodation of some one mental sphere in contact with its sense object, and from that followed the perfect accommodation of all the spheres of mentation and the attainment of Samadhi, Samapatti and the perfect awareness of their *Intuitive and Essential Mind*. So we see that their devout practices, in spite of their variations, all eventuated in the same good result irrespective of their attainments and the times involved.

I want Ananda to fully understand and realize these different attainments of *Enlightenment* and note which of them is adapted to him. And I wish also, that after my Nirvana, as future disciples of this world wish to attain highest *Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi,* that from these experiences they may know which door of expedient means appears to each most easily entered.

Having listened to the Blessed Lord, Manjusri, Prince of the Lord's Dharma, rose from his seat, bowed down to the Lord Buddha, and sobered by the influence of the Lord's profound dignity uttered the following stanza:

The keeping of the Precepts is a necessary part of the practice of Dhyana, but the novice cannot depend upon them alone to bring him to the nature of perfect accommodation . . .

Then Manjusri addressed the Lord Buddha, saying:

Blessed Lord! Since my Lord has descended from the *Deva* Realms to this *Saha* World, he has helped us most by his wonderful Enlightening Teaching. At first we receive this Teaching through our sense of hearing, but when we are fully able to realize it, it becomes ours through a *Transcendental and Intuitive Hearing.* This makes the awakening and perfecting of a *Transcendental Faculty of Hearing* of very great importance to every novice. As the wish to attain Samadhi deepens in the mind of any disciple, he can most surely attain it by means of his *Transcendental Organ of Hearing.*

For many a Kalpa — as numerous as the particles of sand in the river Ganges — Avalokiteshvara Buddha, the hearer and answerer of prayer, has visited all the Buddha-lands of the ten quarters of the universe and has acquired *Transcendental Powers of Boundless Freedom and Fearlessness* and has vowed to emancipate all sentient beings

from their bondage and suffering. How sweetly mysterious is the *Transcendental Sound* of Avalokiteshvara! It is the pure *Brahman Sound. It is the subdued murmur of the sea-tide setting inward.* Its mysterious *Sound* brings liberation and peace to all sentient beings who in their distress are calling for aid; it brings a sense of permanency to those who are truly seeking the attainment of Nirvana's Peace . . .

While I am addressing My Lord Tathagata, he is hearing at the same time, the *Transcendental Sound of Avalokiteshvara.* It is just as though, while we are in the quiet selection of our Dhyana practice, there should come to our ears the *sound of the beating of drums.* If our minds, hearing the sound, are undisturbed and tranquil, this is the nature of perfect accommodation.

The body develops feeling by coming in contact with something, and the sight of eyes is hindered by the opaqueness of objects, and similarly with the sense of smell and of taste, but it is different with the discriminating mind. Thoughts are arising and mingling and passing. At the same time it is conscious of sounds in the next room and sounds that have come from far away. The other senses are not so refined as the

sense of hearing: the nature of hearing is the true reality of Passability.

The essence of sound is felt in both motion and silence, it passes from *existent to non-existent.* When there is no sound, it is said that there is no hearing, but that does not mean that hearing has lost its preparedness. Indeed, when there is no sound, hearing is most alert, and when there is sound the hearing nature is least developed. If any disciple can be freed from these two illusions of appearing and disappearing, that is, from death and rebirth, he has attained the true reality of Permanency.

Even in dreams when all thinking has become quiescent, the hearing nature is still alert. It is like a mirror of enlightenment that is transcendental of the thinking mind because it is beyond the consciousness sphere of both body and mind. In this *Saha world,* the Doctrine of *Intrinsic, Transcendental Sound,* may be spread abroad, but sentient beings as a class remain ignorant and indifferent to their own *Intrinsic Hearing.* They respond only to phenomenal sounds and are disturbed by both musical and discordant sounds.

Nothwithstanding Ananda's wonderful memory, he was not able to avoid falling

into evil ways. He has been adrift on a merciless sea. But if he will only turn his mind away from the drifting current of thoughts, he may soon recover the sober wiseness of Essential Mind. *Ananda! Listen to me!* I have ever relied upon the teaching of the Lord Buddha to bring me to the *Indescribable Dharma Sound of the Diamond Samadhi.* Ananda! You have sought the secret lore from all the Buddha-lands without first attaining emancipation from the desires and intoxications of your own contaminations and attachments, with the result that you have stored in your memory a vast accumulation of worldly knowledge and built up a tower of faults and mistakes.

You have learned the Teachings by listening to the words of the Lord Buddha and then committing them to memory. Why do you not learn from your own self by listening to *Sound of the Intrinsic Dharma* within your mind and then practicing reflection upon it? The perception of *Transcendental Hearing* is not developed by any natural process under the control of your own volition. Sometimes when you are reflecting upon your *Transcendental Hearing* a chance sound suddenly claims your attention and your mind sets it apart and discriminates it and is disturbed thereby. As soon as you

can ignore the phenomenal sound, the notion of *Transcendental Sound* ceases and you will realize your *Intrinsic Hearing.*

As soon as this one sense perception of hearing is returned to its originality and you clearly understand its falsity, then the mind instantly understands the falsity of all sense perceptions and is at once emancipated from the bondage of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking, for they are all alike illusive and delusive visions of unreality and all the three great realms of existence are seen to be what they truly are, imaginary blossoms in the air.

As soon as the deceiving perception of hearing is emancipated, then all objective phenomena disappears and your *Intuitive Mind-Essence* becomes perfectly pure. As soon as you have attained to this *Supreme Purity of Mind-Essence,* its Intrinsic Brightness will shine out spontaneously and in all directions and, as soon as you are sitting in tranquil *Dhyana,* the mind will be in perfect conformity with Pure Space.

Ananda! As soon as you return to the phenomenal world, it will seem like a vision in a dream. And your experience with the maiden Pchiti will seem like a dream, and

your own body will lose its solidity and permanency. It will seem as though every human being, male and female, was simply a manifestation by some skillful magician of a manikin all of whose activities were under his control. Or each human being will seem like an automatic machine that once started goes on by itself, but as soon as the automatic machine loses its motive power, all its activities not only cease, but their very existence disappears.

So it is with the six sense organs, which are fundamentally dependent upon one unifying and enlightening spirit, but which by ignorance have become divided into six semi-independent compositions and conformities. Should one organ become emancipated and return to its originality, so closely are they united in their fundamental originality, that all the organs would cease their activities also. And all worldly impurities will be purified by a single thought and you will attain to the wonderful purity of perfect Enlightenment. Should there remain some minute contamination of ignorance, you should practice the more earnestly until you attain to perfect Enlightenment, that is, to the Enlightenment of a Tathagata.

All the Brothers in this Great Assembly, and you too, Ananda, should reverse your outward perception of hearing and listen inwardly for the perfectly unified and intrinsic sound of your own Mind-Essence, for as soon as you have attained perfect accomodation, you will have attained to *Supreme Enlightenment.*

This is the only way to Nirvana, and it has been followed by all the Tathagatas of the past. Moreover, it is for all the *Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas* of the present and for all in the future if they are to hope for perfect Enlightenment. Not only did Avalokiteshvara attain perfect Enlightenment in long ages past by this Golden Way, but in the present, I also am one of them.

My Lord enquired of us as to which expedient means each one of us had employed to follow this Noble Path to Nirvana. I bear testimony that the *means employed by* Avalokiteshvara *is the most expedient means for all,* since all other means must be supported and guided by the Lord Buddha's Transcendental Powers. Though one forsake all his worldly engagements, yet he cannot always be practicing by these various means; they are especial means suitable *for junior and senior disciples, but for laymen, this common method of concentrating the mind on the sense of hearing, turning it*

inward by this Door of Dharma to hear the Transcendental Sound of this Essential Mind, is most feasible and wise.

O Blessed Lord! I am bowing down before my Lord Tathagata's *Intrinsic Womb,* which is immaculate and ineffable in its perfect freedom from all contaminations and taints, and am praying my Lord to extend his boundless compassion *for the sake of all future disciples,* so that *I may continue to teach Ananda and all sentient beings of the present kalpa, to have faith in this wonderful Door of Dharma to the Intrinsic Hearing of his own Mind-Essence,* so surely to be attained by this most expedient means. If any disciple should take this Intuitive Means for concentrating his mind in Dhyana Practice on this organ of *Transcendental Hearing,* all other sense organs would soon come into perfect harmony with it and thus by this single means of *Intrinsic Hearing,* he would attain perfect accommodation of his *True and Essential Mind.*

Then Ananda and all the great assembly were purified in body and mind. They acquired a profound understanding and a clear insight into the nature of the Lord Buddha's Enlightenment and experience of Highest Samadhi. They had confidence like

> a man who was about to set forth on a most important business to a far off country, because they knew the route to go and return. All the disciples in this great assembly realized their own *Essence of Mind* and proposed henceforth to live remote from all worldly entanglements and taints, and to live continuously in the pure brightness of the Eye of Dharma.

Extracts from *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Bardo Thodol), edited by Dr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz (London, 1957):

> O nobly-born, when thy body and mind were separating thou must have experienced a glimpse of the Pure Truth, subtle, sparkling, bright, dazzling, glorious, and radiantly awesome, in appearance like a mirage moving across a landscape in springtime in one continuous stream of vibrations. Be not daunted thereby, nor terrified, nor awed. That is the radiance of thine own true nature. Recognize it.
>
> From the midst of that radiance, the natural sound of Reality, reverberating like a thousand thunders simultaneously sounding, will come. That is the natural sound of thine own real self. Be not daunted thereby, nor terrified, nor awed.
>
> PAGE 104

> O nobly-born, five-colored radiances. . . vibrating and dazzling like colored threads, flashing, radiant, and transparent, glorious and awe-inspiring, will . . . strike against thy heart, so bright that the eye cannot bear to look upon them.
>
> . . . Be not afraid of that brilliant radiance of five colors, nor terrified; but know that Wisdom to be thine own.
>
> Within those radiances, the natural sound of the Truth will reverberate like a thousand thunders. The sound will come with a rolling reverberation . . . Fear not. Flee not. Be not terrified. Know them (i.e., these sounds) to be (of) . . . thine own inner light.
>
> PAGE 129

Extracts from *My Experience in Meditation* by His Holiness The Venerable Tai Hsu (Chinese Buddhist monk), translated by Bhikku Assaji:

> . . . From this time I discontinued my old routine of meditation; this was from 1908 to 1914. When the European War broke out, I began to doubt Western theory and my own power to save the world with Buddhist teaching. I felt it was a sheer waste of time, if I did any more of what I had done. So I went to "Po-To" island, where I secluded myself in a monastery to develop further spiritual advancement.

After two or three months of seclusion, one night when I was meditating, my mind became calmer, I heard the sound of a bell from a neighboring temple. It seems that my chain of thoughts was broken by that sound and I sank into a state of something like a trance, without knowing anything until early next dawn, when I heard the sound of the matin bell and I regained my sense of knowing. At first, I only felt that a light melted into me. There was no distinction of self and other things and of what was inside and what was outside.

After this experience, I continued my life of reading *sutras,* writing books and meditating, for about one year, and after that one year, I chiefly engaged myself in studying the books of the *Vijnana* School. I especially paid attention to the Records on Wei Shi (*Vijnana).* Here I once more experienced another trance-like state. I was reading for several times repeatedly a certain paragraph of the said Records, explaining that both conditional things and the Truth are devoid of the substance of Self. I entered the trance-like meditation. This time it was different from the former two; I perceived in it that all things which exist on conditions had their deep and subtle order, minutely arranged without the slightest confusion.

This kind of comprehension I can produce now whenever I desire.

The third experience showed me the truth of cause and effect, which appear to be so on account of our consciousness. It is true, the law of cause and effect has its natural way without disorder.

After each of these three experiences, there was some change physically and mentally, and I also happened to have some presage of *divyachaksus* (clairvoyance), *divyasrota* (clairaudience) and *parachittajnana* (thought reading).

If the six supernatural powers are possible, then the theory of *Karma* and *Rebirth,* which is based on the demonstration of clairvoyance and *purvanivasan Usmritijnana* (knowledge of all former existences of self and others) is also believable.

JAINISM

There are two ways of Vidya:

(i) Agh Drishta or Apara Vidya, for the layman who wants physical happiness.

(ii) Yog Drishta or Para Vidya, which deals with that which is above the senses.

Jainism divides Yoga, the science of knowing yourself and attaining perfection, into eight stages as follows:

1. *Mitra* — Vision is very dim. It can be compared to light of grass particles which is momentary and extremely dim. The yogi in this stage adopts vows of non-violence, truth, celibacy, etc. To him all living beings are friends. He bears ill will to none. He finds great happiness in good thoughts and good deeds; but it is not possible in this stage to go much higher.

2. *Tara* — Vision here is also dim, compared to the light of cowdung cake, although vision is a little better, but it is momentary and dim. One adopts short-term rules for purification. He becomes purer in his relations with outside world also. He busies himself in reading of books of great seers. He feels great interest in all that is helpful in raising the soul higher.

3. *Bala* — Vision here is also dim, compared to wood light. *Asanas* are performed. He can easily do *Padmasan* etc., but it is not external *Asanas* which are aimed at but the spiritual *Asanas.* He becomes firm in external *Asanas,* but he experiences

glimpses of spiritual happiness. He rises a little above the body.

4. *Dipra* — is compared to light of *Deepak* or candle light. Here he attains *Pranayam* not only externally but internally also. He has now firm faith that it is the soul which is to be called for primarily. To save the soul he may even give up his body. To attain purification of soul, he is prepared to face any dangers and difficulties. His leaning is more and more toward soul. He attains peace not known before.

5. *Sthira* — is considerably bright and lasting, compared to the light of jewel. He sees the world and worldly things in proper perspective. Strong likes and dislikes have disappeared. He becomes composed and calm and realizes and feels that he is not body but he is some Divine element residing within. He is soul and he feels the difference. He feels his body different from soul. *He gets the Sound from within of various wonderful tunes which attunes one with Samadhi.* Desires of body and senses are not liked by him. He has full faith in God, in the pure form of the soul, and he is yearning to be pure, absolutely pure.

6. *Kanta* — can be compared to light of star. Here there is great control over mind. The mind finds happiness in devotion to God, in love and meditation of pure soul. Mind becomes steady in these higher things and finds no pleasure in physical happiness and amenities. Here he becomes so pure that he can get vision of *Siddhas* — liberated souls, great souls. His actions also become so pure that he is loved even by great Saints.

7. *Prabha* — can be compared to light of sun. It is bright and strong. Here right knowledge has grown immensely and meditation becomes his second nature, and he finds innermost happiness. He is serene, he has great control over his senses and mind.

8. *Para* — can be compared to the light of moon, serene, peaceful and cool. Here meditation reaches highest pitch and he becomes immersed in it. He attains Samadhi *(Sama)* and becomes faultless. His state can be compared to full Moon in all its Splendor.

FROM YOGA DRISHTA SAMUCHAYA
BY SRI HARIBHADRACHARYA

Excerpts from Jain scriptures:

From Suttagame Part II, by Puppha Bhikoo (1954 edition):

> *Tapas* itself is the light and it shines forth in the human body.
>
> PAGE 996, GATHA 44

> Hearing the Sound resembling that of the conch and witnessing the Lotus Light like that of a newly blossomed flower between the two eyebrows, one faces his *Ishta,* the *Satguru.*
>
> PAGE 1046

> When the knowledge finds an anchorage in Knowledge, there flashes forth light.
>
> SAMAYASSAR

> The aspirant is enjoined to sit in solitude and meditate with a single-pointed attention, on the *Maha Mantra* of *Panch parmesti* and to perceive the light.
>
> SHRI SUTRA NANDI

ZOROASTRIANISM

The essence of the Avestic teachings is to be found in the prayers to the various cults of life as taught by Zoroaster, the Master of life, who lived several thousand years ago. Edmund Szekely, speaking of these cults, tells us of the last two cults as follows:

(i) *The Cult of the Light of Life:* The next cult in the Avestas is the cult of Humanity or as the Zend text expresses it, the cult of the "Light of Life." What does this stand for? This Light, declares Zoroaster, comes to us continually from the most distant ages, making it possible for us to possess the total wisdom and experience of previous generations, without the need to try again for ourselves what they have already tried and proved right in the course of thousands of years. For Zoroaster, the greatest fault we can be guilty of, is to neglect this "Light of Life" and to limit it to only a few rays instead of absorbing It in its fullness through observance of the cult which bears its name. Most of the passages concerning the cult of the "Light of Life" are to be found in the book of the Avestas entitled *Vispered,* which is the exact Zend equivalent of our word "Omniscience."

(ii) *The Cult of Eternal Life:* The ninth and last cult in the Avestas is the cult of the Stars — the cult of "Eternal Life." This cult became the one most widely known in antiquity, and most of the passages mentioning Zoroastrianism in the works of the classical Greek authors are concerned with it. According to Zoroaster, life is not the

> exclusive privilege of this planet; there are innumerable planets and solar systems in infinite cosmic space where life exists in a wide range of forms. Zoroaster teaches that life is a form of cosmic energy which will always appear wherever favorable preconditions exist. Life is a cosmic function, an inherent quality of the Universe, and there is in boundless space and time a universal solidarity connecting all forms of life on whatever planet. Certain planets or solar systems may disappear or appear, and the life of them likewise, but life itself, appearing and disappearing, on eternally changing planets and solar systems, is as eternal as the Universe. And man is a part of this eternal life — of this universal cosmic ocean formed by the sum total of all forms of life on all the planets. The most beautiful hymns in the Avestas are to be found in the part devoted to the cult of "Eternal Life."

The Avestic term for the principle of life is "Sraosha" (the angel of inspiration). In Zend Avesta, we have an invocation to Mazda praying for the gift of Sraosha for those whom He loves.

Mr. M.H. Toot, a great scholar of comparative religions, in his book, *Practical Metaphysics of Zoroastrians*, tells us that in "Gatha Ushtavaiti," Ratu Zoroaster proclaimed:

Thus I reveal the Word which the Most
Unfolded One has taught me,
The Word which is the best for mortals to
listen.
Whosoever shall render obedience and
steadfast attention unto Me, will obtain
for his own self the All-embracing
Whole Being and Immortality;
And through the service of the Holy
Divine Spirit
Will realize *Mazda Ahura* (i.e., Godhead).

HA 45-8

Again the same scholar quotes elsewhere in an as yet unpublished work, the following passages from "Ahuravaiti Yasna":

Divine Guidance of the Eternal Master,
Accomplishing long life in the Right Paths
leading to the Absolute Kingdom of the
Divine Mind,
Wherein the Omniscient, Self-existent
Life-Giver dwells by His all-pervading
Reality,
I cause to invoke that divine Sraosha (i.e.,
the Word) which is the greatest of all
divine gifts for spiritual succour.

HA 33-35

The *Creative Verbum:*

Assimilating one's unfolding self with His all-pervading Reality
The Omniscient, Self-existent Life-Giver has framed this mystic *Verbum* and Its melodious rhythm,
With the Divine Order of personal self-sacrifice for the Universe, unto the self-sublimating souls,
Which is that person who with the Enlightened Superb Mind can give both these (Mystic *Verbum* and Divine Order) through His gracious mouth unto the mortals.

HA 29-7

JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

The Jewish and Christian scriptures abound with references to the Word as the creative aspect of God, and as the means by which He is reached. In the very beginning of the Bible we read:

> In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth . . . And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.
>
> GENESIS 1:1, 3

This is elaborated by St. John as follows:

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

> All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not . . . That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.
>
> JOHN 1: 1-5, 9, 14

Christ further explained the initiatory aspect of the Word in one of his most famous parables:

> Behold, there went out a sower to sow; And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: But when the sun was up, it scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And others fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some a hundred. And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. . . .

> The sower soweth the Word. And these are they by the way side, where the Word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the Word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the Word, immediately receive it with gladness; and have no root in themselves, and so endure for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the Word's sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the Word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the Word, and it become unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the Word and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.
>
> MARK 4:4-9, 14-20

Following are some of the many references to the Word or the Audible Life Stream found throughout the Old and New Testaments:*

> By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made . . . For he spake and it was done.
>
> PSALM 33:6, 9

*For a complete discussion of the teachings of Christ in this connection, see *The Crown of Life* (Delhi, 1970) by the same author, pp. 204-213.

Forever, O Lord, thy Word is settled in heaven . . . . Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

PSALM 119:89, 105

The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe.

PROVERBS 18:10

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God shall stand forever.

ISAIAH 40:8

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me, mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize (immerse) you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.

MATTHEW 3: 11

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

MATTHEW 4:4

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

JOHN 3:8

Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my Word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath ever lasting life and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

JOHN 5:24

Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you.

.JOHN 15:3

I have manifested thy Name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world . . . I have given them thy Word . . .

.JOHN 17:6, 14

Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth.

JOHN 17:17

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the Word of his power . . .

HEBREWS 1:3

For the Word of God is quick (living), and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

HEBREWS 4: 12

> Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls.
>
> JAMES 1:21

> Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.
>
> I PETER 1:23

> And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.
>
> REVELATION 14:1-3

The testimony of Christian saints of all traditions (Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox) confirms and clarifies the scriptural references:

> Those in whom the eternal Word speaks are delivered from uncertainty. From one Word proceed all things and all things tell

> of Him. Love the Word better than the world.
>
> THE IMITATION OF CHRIST

> The Word of God became man that you also may learn from a man how a man becomes a God.
>
> CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

> Absolutely unutterable and indescribable are the lightning-like splendors of Divine beauty; neither can speech express nor hearing apprehend. Shall we name the brilliance of the morning star, the brightness of the moon, the radiance of the sun — the glory of all these is unworthy of being compared with the true light, standing farther from it than does the gloomiest night and the most terrible darkness from midday brightness. This beauty, invisible to bodily eyes, comprehensible to soul and mind only, if it illumines some of the saints leaves in them an unbearable wound through their desire that this vision of Divine beauty should extend over an eternity of life; disturbed by this earthly life, they loathe it as though it were a prison.
>
> ST. BASIL THE GREAT

The writings of Jacob Boehme, the Lutheran cobbler mystic of seventeenth-century Germany, center around the Word and offer conclusive evidence that the esoteric teachings of Christ

(Surat Shabd Yoga) had not been completely forgotten:

> If you should in this world bring many thousand sorts of musical instruments together, and all should be tuned in the best manner most artificially, and the most skillful masters of music should play on them in concert together, all would be no more than the howlings and barkings of dogs in comparison of the Divine Music, which rises through the Divine Sound and tunes from Eternity to Eternity.
>
> THE AURORA

> For all whatsoever has life, liveth in the Speaking Word, the Angels in the Eternal Speaking and the temporal spirits in the re-expression or echoing forth of the formings of time, out of the sound or breath of Time and the angels out of the Sound of Eternity, viz., out of the Voice of the Manifested Word of God.
>
> MYSTERIUM MAGNUM

> The Disciple said to his Master; How may I come to the super-sensual life, that I may see God and hear him speak?
>
> His Master said: When thou canst throw thyself but for a moment into that where no creature dwelleth, then thou hearest what God speaketh.

Disciple: Is that near at hand or far off?

Master: It is in thee. And if thou canst for a while but cease from all thy thinking and willing, then thou shalt hear the unspeakable words of God.

Disciple: How can I hear him speak, when I stand still from thinking and willing?

Master: When thou standest still from the thinking of self, and the willing of self; "When both thy intellect and will are quiet, and passive to the impressions of the Eternal Word and Spirit; And when thy soul is winged up, and above that which is temporal, the outward senses, and the imagination being locked up by holy abstraction," then the Eternal hearing, seeing, and speaking, will be revealed in thee; and so God "heareth and seeth through thee," being now the organ of his spirit: and so God speaketh in thee, and whispereth to thy spirit, and thy spirit heareth his voice. Blessed art thou therefore if that thou canst stand still from self-thinking and self-willing, and canst stop the wheel of imagination and senses . . . Since it is naught indeed but thine own hearing and willing that do wonder thee, so that thou dost not see and hear God.

OF THE SUPERSENSUAL LIFE

The following is the spiritual experience of Eliphas Levi, a Catholic priest:

> A particular phenomenon occurs when the brain is overcharged by Astral Light; sight is turned inward instead of outward; night falls on the external and real world, while fantastic brilliance shines on the world of dreams; even the physical eyes experience a slight quivering and turn up inside the lids. The soul then preceives by means of images the reflection of its impressions and thoughts. This is to say that the analogy subsisting between idea and form attracts in the Astral Light of reflection representing that form, configuration being the essence of the vital light; it is the universal imagination, of which each of us appropriates a lesser or greater part according to our grade of sensibility and memory. Therein is the source of all apparitions, all extraordinary visions and all the intuitive phenomena peculiar to ecstasy.
>
> The appropriation or assimilation of the light by clairvoyant sensibility is one of the greatest phenomena which can be studied by science. It may be understood in a day to come that seeing is actually speaking and that, *the consciousness of light is a twilight of eternal life in being.* The Word of God Himself, who creates light, and is uttered by

all intelligence that conceives of forms and seeks to visualize them. "Let there be light." Light in the mode of brightness exists only for eyes which look thereon, and a soul enamored with the pageant of universal beauty, and fixing its attention on that luminous script of the endless book which is called things manifest, seems to cry on its own part, as God at the dawn of the first day, the sublime and creative words: *Fiat Lux . . .*

. . . To understand the cause of this force, but never to be obsessed and never overcome thereby, is to trample on the serpent's head. In such secrets are contained all *mysteries of magnetism,* which name can indeed be applied to the whole part of *antique Transcendental Power.* Magnetism is the wand of miracles, but it is this for initiates only; for rash and uninstructed people, who would sport with it or make it subserve their passions, it is as dangerous as that consuming glory which, according to the allegorical fable, destroyed the too ambitious Semele in the embraces of Jupiter.

One of the great benefits of magnetism is that it demonstrates by incontestable facts the spirituality, unity and immortality of the soul; and these things once made certain, God is manifested to all intelligences and

all hearts. Thereafter, from the belief in God and from the harmonies of creation we are led to that great religious harmony . . .

. . . It follows from this revelation of the ancient world that clairvoyant *extasis* is a voluntary and immediate application of the soul to the *universal fire,* or rather to that light — abounding in images — which radiates, which speaks and circulates about all objects and every sphere of the universe. This application is operated by the persistence of will liberated from the senses and fortified by a succession of tests. Herein consisted the beginning in the light, the adept became a seer or prophet; then having established communications between this light and his own will, he learned to direct the former, even as the head of an arrow is set in a certain direction. He communicated at his pleasure either strife or peace to the soul of others; he established intercourse at a distance with those fellow-adepts who were his peers, and, in fine, he availed himself of that force which is represented by the celestial lion. Herein lies the meaning of those great Assyrian figures which hold vanquished lions in their arms. The *Astral Light* is otherwise represented by gigantic sphinxes having the bodies of lions and the heads of Magi. Considered as an instru-

ment, the Astral Light is that golden sword of *Mithra* used in his immolation of the bull. And it is the arrow of *Phoebus* which pierced the serpent Python . . .

The Astral Light as a whole, that element of electricity and of lightning, can be placed at the disposition of human will. What must be done, however, to acquire this formidable Power? Zoroaster has just told us; we must know those mysterious laws of equilibrium which subjugate the very powers of evil by sacred trials, must have conquered the phantoms of hallucination and taken hold bodily of the light, imitating Jacob in his struggle with the angel. We must have vanquished those fantastic dogs which howl in the world of Oracle, we must have heard the light speak. We are then its masters and can direct it, as Numa did, against the enemies of the *Holy Mysteries.* But in the absence of perfect purity, and if under the government of some animal passion, by which we are still subjected to the fatalities of tempestuous life, we proceed to this kind of work, the fire which we kindle will consume ourselves; we shall fall victims to the serpent which we unloose and shall perish like Tullus Hostilius . . .

Pythagoras defined God as a *living and Absolute Truth clothed in light;* he defined the

Word as number manifested by form; and he derived all things from the *Tetractys* — that is to say, the tetrad. He said also that *God is supreme music; the nature of which is harmony.*

It is related furthermore that beasts were obedient to Pythagoras. Once in the middle of the Olympic Games, he signaled to an eagle winging its way through heaven; the bird descended, wheeling circlewise, and again took rapid flight at the master's token of dismissal. There was also a great bear ravaging in Apulia; Pythagoras brought it to his feet and told it to leave the country. It disappeared accordingly, and when asked to what knowledge he owed such a marvelous power, he answered: "To the *Science of Light.*" Animated beings are, in fact, incarnations of light. Out of the darkness of ugliness forms emerge and move progressively toward the splendors of beauty, instincts are in correspondence with forms; and man, who is the synthesis of the light whereof animals may be termed the analysis, is created to command them. It has come about, however, that in place of ruling as their master, he has become their persecutor and destroyer, so that they fear and have rebelled against him. In the presence of an exceptional will which is at once benevolent and directing,

they are completely magnetized, and a host of modem phenomena both can and should enable us to understand the possibility of miracles like those of Pythagoras . . .

The Astral Light is the *living soul of the earth,* a material and fatal soul, controlled in its productions and movements by the *eternal laws of equilibrium* . . . This light, which environs and permeates all bodies, can also suspend their weight and make them revolve about a powerfully absorbent center . . .

ISLAM

Among the Muslim Sufis, it is known as *Sultan-ul-Azkar* (the king of prayers). Another order of Sufis call it *Sauti-Sarmadi*, (the Divine Song). They also call it *Kalam-i-qadim* (the Ancient Sound), and the *Kalma* or "Word," *Nida-e-Asmani* (the Sound coming down from Heaven). The fourteen Tabaqs (regions) were made by the *Kalma* — the Word.

Khawaja Hafiz, a great divine, says:

From the turret of the Heaven, a call bids thee Home,
But fallen into the snares thou listeneth not.
No one knows where the Mansion of the Beloved lies,

But sure enough, the chiming of the bells
proceeds therefrom.

Again,

Take the stop-cock from thy ears, and hear
thou the voice of emancipation coming
to thee,
Attach yourself not to the material world,
The elixir of life is showering from above.
The beat of Love while sounding in the
Heavens,
Sends blessings to the souls of the
devotees.

Jalaluddin Rumi, in his Masnavi, says:

Grow not skeptical, but attune thyself
to the Sound coming down from the
Heavens,
Thy soul shall have revelations from afar.
What are these? the glimpses of the
Unrevealed; were I to speak of these
sweet melodies,
Even the dead shall rise from their graves.

Again,

Rise above the horizon, O brave soul, and
hear the Melodious Song coming from
the highest heaven.

Prophet Mohammed said that he heard the "Voice of God" as any other sound.

Shah Niaz, another Muslim devotee, says:

> Soul is the *Will* and the *Secret of God.* Its meditation is carried on without the help of tongue and palate. Alas! thou art stuck fast in the physical bondage and do not hear the *Holy Sound of God.* My Beloved is speaking to thee all the while, but woe to thee for thou heareth not the *Voice.*

Again,

> The whole universe is resounding with the Sound, and thou hast only to open the door of thine ears.
>
> For opening the ears, it is sufficient to stop hearing the outer sounds. If you do this, you will hear the perpetual and unending Sound. It is infinite and has no beginning nor end, and on account of that, It is called *Anhad* (i.e., without any limits). Without this Word — the *Eternal Sound* — an expression of the Infinite, the world could not have come into existence. Hold communion with the *Melodious Sound* and lose yourself in it, O wise man.
>
> O God! show me that place from where the *Kalma* (Sound Principle) proceedeth without Words.

BAHAISM

Here are a few extracts taken from the "Hidden Words" of Baha-Ullah, a mystic saint of Persia:

> O Son of Love!
> Thou art but one step away from the glorious heights above and from the celestial tree of love. Take thou one pace and with the next, advance into the Immortal Realm and enter the Pavilion of Eternity. Give ear then to that which hath been revealed by the pen of glory.
>
> O Essence of Negligence!
> Myriad of mystic tongues find utterance in one speech, and myriads of mysteries are revealed in a single melody; yet, alas! there is no ear to hear, nor heart to understand.
>
> O Children of Negligence and Passion!
> . . . Open your ears that ye may hearken unto the Word of God, the help in peril, the Self-Existent.
>
> O Son of Dust!
> . . . hearken unto the mystic voice calling from the Realm of the Invisible.
>
> O Son of Being!
> Thou art My Lamp, and My Light is in thee . . . I have created thee rich . . . and with-

in thee have I placed the essence of My Light.

O Son of Spirit!
. . . Alas! How strange and pitiful, for a mere cupful, they have turned away from the billowing seas of the Most High, and remained far from the most effulgent horizon.

O Offspring of Dust!
. . . up from thy prison ascend unto the glorious meads above, and from thy mortal cage, wing thy flight unto the paradise of the Placeless.

O Son of spirit!
Burst thy cage asunder, and even as the phoenix of love, soar into the firmament of holiness. Renounce thyself, and filled with the spirit of mercy, abide in the realm of celestial sanctity.

O Son of Man!
Ascend into My heaven, that thou mayest obtain the joy of reunion, and from the chalice of imperishable glory quaff the peerless wine.

O My Servant!
. . . This is the river of everlasting life that hath flowed from the well-spring of the

pen of the merciful; well is it with them that drink!

O Son of Passion!
Cleanse thyself from the defilement of riches and in perfect peace advance into the realm of poverty; that from the well-spring of detachment thou mayest quaff the wine of immortal life.

O Son of my Handmaid!
Quaff from the tongue of the merciful the stream of divine mystery . . .

THE TEACHINGS OF THE MASTERS

Without the Word, Sound or Eternal Song, the soul sees not. Where could she go? As she cannot fathom the mystery of "Word" she is wandering from place to place.

KABIR SAHIB

Mind hankereth after evil; through the Word the Master restraineth it.

GURU TEG BAHADUR

Through the medium of the Word, soul doth cross the endless ocean of matter. Lowly Nanak, therefore, glorifies His Naam (the Word).[99]

The Word is both earth and ether. These had their being through the Word. This Word expressed Itself in other aspects as well. The whole creation sprang up after the Word. O Nanak, the endless Word is reverberating in each heart.[100]

The all-pervading Word has attracted all my mind. What else have I to think of? Communion of the soul with the Word creates everlasting Bliss. At-one-ment with the Lord procures the Essence of Joy and Peace.[101]

I am emancipated. The God-man has unfettered me. Through the communion of soul with the Word, I have gained the resplendent seat of honor. O Nanak! the All-pervading Naam or the Word dwelleth in the hearts of all. The company of the *Gurumukhs* procures communion with It.[102]

Far off, on the other shore, is my Beloved. The God-man's Word alone carries the soul across. In the company of the saints, man is in bliss and never repents.[103]

How can the ignorant get to the principle of union of soul with the Word? Without communion with the Word, soul comes and goes. O Nanak! the *Gurumukh* who

is himself emancipated, is met by the merciful Writ of the Lord.[104]

GURU NANAK

The creation and the ultimate dissolution of the universe is caused through the Word. Again, through the Word, it takes its existence anew.[105]

GURU AMAR DAS

By good luck, the Lord Consort has become ours. The Endless Song (the Word), resounding everywhere, gives a clue to His Court.[106]

The Word made all the earthly and heavenly systems.[107]

GURU ARJAN

He is the true saint, who talks about the secret of the Divine Word (Eternal Sound). Having scrutinized the *Unknowable* and the *Unthinkable,* He has realized the *Bani* (the Eternal Sound).

TULSI DAS

Word is the lock and Word is the key thereto,

With the chains of the Word, all are bound.

The Lord resideth in the form of the Word,
I bow my head at His Feet.

DOOLAN SAHIB

Ever since I heard the Limitless Divine Song
(Anhad) reverberating throughout,
The *indriyas* (organs) have become tired of
going out,
And the mind has shed all its ramifications,
All desires have been satisfied; like a
madman, I have lost myself in the
Word, and obtained complete oneness
with It.

CHARAN DAS

The Sound of the Word is the prime cause of all. It is also the be-all and the end-all. The three regions and the fourth were made by It. The Word and the Spirit are of the same origin and both spring from the essence of the *Nameless One.* It is both the cause and the effect, and all were created by It. The Word is the preceptor as well as the disciple and is resounding in the heart of everyone. The Word is water and It is the fish also. Kabir speaks only of this Word. Nanak and Tulsi proclaimed the same Truth. The king and the minister, both are Word personified. Radha Swami (the Lord of the Spirit) says: My brave son, listen to It.

SWAMI SHIVDAYAL SINGH

3. A Study in Naam

The Word (Sound) is echoing and re-echoing in the whole of creation. There is no place without It. It is resounding in the living temple of the human body.

The riches of Naam are lasting and inexhaustible

The treasure-house of Naam is perfectly secure and eternally the same:

> While worldly riches come and go, the riches of Naam are eternal and ever-lasting,
> Fire cannot destroy It, nor can It be stolen.[108]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

Therefore it is said:

> Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal;
> But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal;
> For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.[109]
>
> CHRIST

I am possessed of the treasure of Naam,
Whosoever gets It, is emancipated,
It can neither be stolen nor destroyed,
It is tax-free and is not affected by the ravages of time.[110]

GURU NANAK

Attributes of Naam

The fountain of Naam is eternal and perennially full. It springs from Sant Satguru (One established in Truth) and becomes manifest in a Gurumukh (One who scrupulously follows the teachings of the Guru). He who realizes and experiences It within himself becomes truly blessed.

We have the treasure of Naam in abundance,
Satguru transmits his own Life-current,
May he live eternally.[111]

GURU RAM DAS

Word is an inexhaustible treasure and resides in the heart of a Gurumukh.[112]

GURU ARJAN

The riches of Naam never run out and are inestimable,
With the gift of Naam one verily shines bright
And becomes the knower of Truth.[113]

GURU AMAR DAS

Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.[114]

CHRIST

The wealth of Naam is truly great and is surging every where:

Verily, verily the wealth of Naam is truly great,
It is surging full and free within each individual. [115]

GURU NANAK

Naam is Hukam and Shabd:

He who attunes with the Will of God (Controlling Power of Naam) is truly acceptable,
The Master's Shabd gives a clue to and is indicative of the Naam.[116]

GURU AMAR DAS

Naam is the heritage of the devotees; Guru is the Treasure house, and Sikh the dealer in this merchandise:

The devotee's true capital is the treasure of Naam.
This he spends quite freely.[117]

GURU ARJAN

Verily, verily, blessed is the merchant that deals in Naam,
For his disciples buy this commodity and through Shabd cross over the Sea of Life.[118]

GURU RAM DAS

God is truly the King of Naam:

Hari Naam is thy crest jewel,
Thou hast a monopoly in this respect and Thy disciples trade in It.[119]

Naam is the greatest support for ensouled bodies; Naam is the only prop. Devotees have a friend in Him and are able to get single-minded devotion through the agency of Naam.

O Nanak! Naam is the mainstay of the *Jivas,* and without It, there is no support,
Let the universes appear and disappear but one who is devoted to a Gurumukh remains steadfast like a rock in the changing panorama of life.[120]

GURU RAM DAS

The Name of the Lord is a tonic for the mind,
By its use the *Pranas* and the senses get steady,
Naam is my all in all and everything to me,

He is my constant friend and guide and
helps me to safely cross over the "Sea
of Life." [121]

GURU ARJAN

The True Naam is my staff for It helps me
always and satiates all my cravings.[122]
Listen ye, O saints, says Nanak, and make
friends with Naam for It is his only
Pole-star.[123]

GURU AMAR DAS

Thy name alone is a great blessing for the
world,
For me It is a sure support and a sheet
anchor.[124]

GURU NANAK

The spiritual practice of Naam

The correct and accurate method of spiritual sadhna is explained by a Master-soul at the time of initiation. The Science of Naam is coeval with creation and the most natural. No human agency has any hand in It. It is an eternal Kirtan or Song Celestial, which comes to a person as a free gift from a Master-soul like the free gifts of Nature such as water, air, sunshine, etc. It involves transmitting of actual life-impulse from one to the other and comes through the grace of the Master. At initiation, he gives some experience of rising above body-consciousness by opening the inner eye and ear to see the light of God and to hear the Sound principle.

The Sadhna of Naam is the easiest and the quickest as it is the most natural. It is to be done with the tongue of thought. Religious beliefs and national feelings do not come in its way. It is Sehaj Yoga and everyone irrespective of color, caste, or creed, sex or age, profession or avocation, can practice it and derive benefit from it. It is an old old wine, but ever fresh, presented in new bottles to suit the needs of the age. In this scientific age it is presented purely as any other science, verifiable as scientific truths are with mathematical precision.

Truth never gets old nor rusty.[125]

GURU AMAR DAS

It is so natural and so easy that one can take to it as a matter of routine. It involves no intricacies and mysterious practices, and one can safely go ahead on the path with ease and comfort. It is a Grand Trunk Road to God. One may with a little labor gather a rich harvest. What the Rishis of old achieved with much labor extending over centuries can now be gained easily with sincere devotion from day to day, without any physical penances or tortuous practices.

To start with one has to take care to devote time regularly at fixed hours in some solitary place. But as soon as inner experience becomes a regular feature with the aspirant, then all restric-

tions as to time and place drop off, and one can hear the Divine Symphony all day long, even in the midst of most strenuous work, without any effort on his part.

Sleeping or awake, sitting or standing,
Kabir remains ever at his post within.

KABIR

With the Dhun Atmak or inner Sound Current ever reverberating audibly, spirit gets ever absorbed in It. All his worldly acts hereafter become a part of his one interminable Sadhna. Always in contact with the light and life of God, one lives in and feels His immanent presence.

Paramhans Ramakrishna, the saint of Dakhshineswar, when questioned by Naren (afterwards Swami Vivekananda) if he could see God, unhesitatingly declared, "Yes, my child, I see Him as plainly as I see you." Guru Nanak says, "Nanak sees his Lord visibly."

Having once witnessed face to face the glory of God within, one becomes ever conscious of His presence. In tune with the Infinite, whatever one does forms a part of worship. Kabir Sahib gives a beautiful pen-picture of this state:

Peerless is the natural form of meditation,
With the grace of the Master, I remain
attuned all the time;

Wherever I go and whatever I do, it is all worship,
At home or abroad makes no difference to me;
Renouncing all, I listen to the Transcendental Music within,
Awake or asleep and at all hours I am deeply engrossed;
Why close the eyes, stop the ears or undergo penances,
When with open eyes I see the Lord in so many forms?
This is how Kabir leads his life and he tells this openly to all.
Beyond the realm of duality lies the region of eternal bliss.

Guru Arjan says in this context:

The Lord which cannot be described by any scripture,
Is visibly seen by Nanak permeating everywhere.[126]

How Naam is reached

(i) Through the pure and simple grace of God:

Naam would sink deep into the heart of one whom God would like to be blessed with.[127]

GURU AMAR DAS

He alone gets to Naam, as God may so ordain.[128]

GURU ARJAN

There is no treasure greater than Naam, That comes through the grace of God.[129]

GURU AMAR DAS

(ii) Through ordination of God:

Such alone get attached with Hari Naam who are so ordained by God; for they get peace and hear within them the unceasing Divine Melody.[130]

Naam means and includes the merit of all *Japas, Tapas** and orderly living, for without Naam there cannot be purification of the mind,
It is in the fullness of time that one gets hold of the Divine Link of Naam and merges into lt.[131]

GURU AMAR DAS

O Nanak! it is with mighty good fortune that one gets Naam.[132]

He alone engages in Naam who is so destined.[133]

GURU RAM DAS

(iii) Through the grace of Sant Satguru or one established in or grounded in Naam:

*Repetition of *mantras* or verbal formulae, and performance of austerities and penances.

Through Naam the whole creation came into being. The experience of ambrosial Naam comes through a Satguru.[134]

Whatever Thou doest, that alone is true. The nectar of Naam is bestowed by a Satguru.[135]

GURU NANAK

None but the Satguru is the munificent Lord,
For He gives us the support of Naam.[136]

GURU AMAR DAS

Worship Naam in full faith and devotion,
O Nanak! this can be done with the Sadh.[137]

Virtueless as I am, God has still been merciful,
O Nanak! Sadh alone can make Naam manifest.[138]

GURU ARJAN

Life originates only from life. A living Master and no one else can transmit a life-impulse to others. The sages and seers have always emphasized that Naam should be made manifest within by whoever may be able to do it; and then the experience obtained from the competent Master-soul must be developed.

Go wherever thou wilt to get contact with the Divine Link,

> And then with the grace of the Guru
> develop this experience.[139]
>
> GURU NANAK

A Muslim divine says the same thing:

> Should you like to go on a *Haj* (pilgrimage to Mecca), take with you a *Haji* (one who has been to Mecca) for a guide, no matter if he be a Hindu, a Turk, or an Arab.

For an experience of the Divine Link it is necessary to contact a Sant Satguru, for he alone can explain the theory and grant a practical demonstration of the Reality within each one of us. The charged words of the Master, his magnetic influence and the life-giving rays emanating from him, quickly help in withdrawal of the sensory currents from the body; for unless the spirit, surging downwards and rushing headlong into the world through the outgoing faculties, is concentrated at its own seat, behind the two eyebrows, it cannot reflect upon itself.

It is a practical experience of self-analysis or separating the inner man (Soul or the higher self) from the outer man (lower self consisting of mind and material body). By force of age-old habits we are unfortunately clinging to the outer man and are reveling all the time in the outer world with which we have identified ourselves. There is a regular process of inversion or receding,

tapping inside, as Emerson puts it, or conversion into a little child, as Christ called it; and none but an adept on the spiritual path can help in cutting the *Gordian Knot* and separating the spirit, for a while, from the mind and outgoing faculties. It is, in other words, a supramental experience of the spirit on a super-sensual plane and can successfully be imparted by a Master-soul.

This experiment can not be practically performed by reading scriptures and holy books, for they can neither speak nor explain their true import; nor can they be a guide to the spirit as it transcends the physical plane and traverses higher regions, most of which are fraught with subtle dangers and difficulties from which the Master in His luminous form can protect and lead the spirit safely from plane to plane. Those who take up the Way without a competent Master are likely to be deceived by the Negative Power and misled. In Surat Shabd Yoga, the importance of the Master cannot be over-emphasized. He is in fact the central figure, from the beginning to the end, in life and after life, helping visibly and invisibly beyond the ends of the earth, right up to the Judgment Seat of God and even beyond.

Naam is the heritage of the Gurmukh

All are engaged in the repetition of names,
But one gets to Naam only through the grace of a Master-saint.[140]

GURU AMAR DAS

Spirituality can neither be bought nor taught, but may be caught like any infection from a spiritually infected person, a Satguru, a Sadh or a Sant. An adept in spirituality may in compassion and grace grant a spiritual experience of Naam, now lying buried within each one of us. We have of course to develop a receptive attitude and then the grace flows in automatically. The riches of Naam or Word come to a Gurmukh and not to a manmukh, who constantly grovels on the sensual plane.

Search within for everything is within,
Only a devotee of the Guru can unearth Naam,
And remain in touch with It all the time.
Inexhaustible as is the treasure of Naam, It comes to one so ordained.[141]

GURU AMAR DAS

Nothing comes up to Naam,
O Nanak! a rare Gurumukh gets this gift.[142]

GURU ARJAN

By communion with the Naam one gets to know the value of the Naam,

By communion with the Naam, one is
cleansed of the sins and knows Truth;
By communion with the Naam, O Nanak,
one becomes luminous,
But one gets this communion through the
grace of a Guru.[143]

GURU RAM DAS

Escaping bondage one attains salvation
and remains absorbed in Truth,
Naam is a rare thing in this world, only a
true devotee may get to It,
Nanak would make a sacrifice of himself
for one who is devotedly attached to his
Guru.[144]

A worldly-wise man knows not the Naam,
And without Naam, loses his respect here
and hereafter.
He derives not the benefit of Naam,
Engaged as he is in other pursuits.[145]

GURU AMAR DAS

The philosophy of Naam cannot be explained in words. A mere talk on Naam is not helpful at all, for the Naam can only be contacted through an inner experience.

If we were to ask a professor to get us an M.A. degree in return for cash, he would refuse. We have to work for it and qualify for it. The Power of God is within each one of us, but through the grace of a Master-soul and some spiritual disci-

pline it can be made manifest and developed. But all creation whatever the source (Andaj, Jairaj, Setaj, Utbhuj) and all modes of Japa worship (Baik-heri, Madhma, Pashianti and Para) are far removed from Naam and are nothing but a grand delusion.

> All creation and all modes of worship
> remain in delusion without Naam.[146]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

A contact with this Naam comes only through devotion to a Master-soul and not otherwise.

> The Kingdom of God cometh not by observation. The Kingdom of God is within you.[147]
>
> CHRIST

Be ye the doers of the Word and not the hearers only, was the advice of Jesus to his followers.

Human life is a great privilege, for every individual is gifted with an ethereal element in his constitution that gives him the power of discrimination — judging right from wrong and evaluating life's essentials and non-essentials. On this Path two things are absolutely necessary: A true Guide or an Adept traveler of the Path, and the practice of Naam or the spiritual Sadhna as enjoined by that Adept. But one who has not yet freed himself from the world and worldly entanglements cannot achieve anything in this sphere.

The Divine Link within us is the very life of our life, yet Its contact comes through the grace of Master-soul; and without an actual experience of the Godhead within, all creatures and all Sadhnas, or religious practices, are of no consequence whatsoever.

> All creation and all devotion is a noisy game without the saving Grace of Naam.

Contact with Naam is possible through the Grace of some living Master, for without his help and guidance one simply cannot have this inner experience of the soul.

> I got Hari-Naam through the compassion of a living Master,
> Without a Satguru to help him through, one can have no experience of It at all.[148]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

It is, however, extremely difficult to meet a genuine Master of Truth.

> God Himself has ordained that no one can even conceive of Him except through a Satguru.[149]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

The merits of the Word

Holy books tell us of the innumerable merits of Naam or Word. The Word has been described in

the Gospel as the Bread of Life and the Water of Life for it alone quenches the hunger and thirst of the soul.

> Let him that is athirst, come,
> And whosoever will, let him take the
> "Water of Life" freely.[150]
>
> THE BOOK OF REVELATION

"A healthy mind in a healthy body" is a well-known aphorism, and both derive their health and vigor from the soul; and if the soul is not provided with an adequate supply of nourishing and appropriate food-stuff the whole system, physical and mental, will be paralyzed. Soul is a Conscious entity and must, therefore, feed freely on Love, Life and Light, the three essentials of Greater Consciousness.

(i) Naam or Word is the panacea for all ills: Adhibhautik or bodily ailments like disease, sickness, old age, etc; Adhidevik or ills coming on of themselves, like accident, storms and earthquakes, etc., over which a person has no control, and Adhiatmic or mental ills, like desires and fascinations of the world, anger, greed and attachments, etc.

> Naam is the sovereign remedy for all ills;
> It is a Comforter and a Bestower of bliss.[151]
>
> GURU ARJAN

Again it helps as a true guide, both here and hereafter.

It is a constant companion in both the worlds: Leave aside all else and be devoted to Naam alone.[152]

GURU NANAK

On the lonesome and dreary path of the soul after death,
Naam acts as a Guide and a Comforter.[153]

O my tongue! repeat ye the Naam,
Thou shalt be blessed here,
And hereafter thou shalt have comfort.[154]

GURU ARJAN

(ii) Advantages of listening to the Sound Principle of Naam or Word: Guru Nanak, in the eighth to the eleventh stanzas of the *Jap Ji* (a daily prayer of the Sikhs), enumerates many advantages that accrue from the hearing and acceptance of Naam.

STANZA 8

By communion with the Naam, one can attain the status of a *Sidha,* a *Pir,* a *Sura,* or a *Nath;**

By communion with the Naam, the earthly regions, the heavenly plateaux and the nether worlds stand revealed;

* Respectively, a man endowed with supernatural powers; a Muslim divine or spiritual teacher; a god; and an adept in yoga.

By communion with the Naam, one can escape unscathed through the portals of death;
O Nanak! His devotees live in perpetual ecstacy, for the Naam washes away all sin and sorrow.

STANZA 9

By communion with the Naam, one can attain the powers of *Siva, Brahma* and *Indra;*
By communion with the Naam one can win esteem from all, irrespective of one's past;
By communion with the Naam, one can have Yogic insight, with the mysteries of life and self all revealed;
By communion with the Naam, one can acquire the true import of the *Sastras, Smritis* and the *Vedas;*
O Nanak! His devotees live in perpetual ecstasy, for the Naam washes away all sin and sorrow.

STANZA 10

By communion with the Naam, one becomes the abode of Truth, contentment and true knowledge;
By communion with the Naam, one gets the fruit of ablution at Sixty-eight* pilgrimages;

* Literally, *ath-sath;* refers to the Hindu belief that ablution at sixty-eight places of pilgrimage brings purity from all sinful acts.

By communion with the Naam, one wins the honor of the learned;
By communion with the Naam, one attains the state of *Sahaj*†;
O Nanak! His devotees live in perpetual ecstasy, for the Naam washes away all sin and sorrow.

STANZA 11

By communion with the Naam, one becomes the abode of all virtues;
By communion with the Naam, one becomes a *Sheikh*, a *Pir* and a true spiritual king;
By communion with the Naam, the spiritually blind find their way to realization;
By communion with the Naam, one crosses beyond the limitless ocean of illusionary matter;
O Nanak! His devotees live in perpetual ecstasy, for the Naam washes away all sin and sorrow.

By "hearing" or "communion" Guru Nanak meant communion with the Naam and nothing else, as would be clear from Gurbani:

By hearing the Sound Current, one is truly blessed and riches follow at his heels;

† Refers to the state beyond the turmoil of the physical, astral and causal worlds with all their enchanting panorama, and where the great principle of life is seen within.

By hearing the Sound Current, one acquires miraculous powers and all his desires are fulfilled;
By hearing the Sound Current, one gets fully contented and becomes devoted to Him;
By hearing the Sound Current, one reaches the *Sehaj* and finds comfort;
By hearing the Sound Current, one knows the Truth and escapes the angel of death;
By hearing the Sound Current, one becomes self-luminous, and all darkness departs;
By hearing the Sound Current, one becomes the knower of the self and reaps the full benefit of Naam;
By hearing the Sound Current, one is washed of his sins and meets pure Truth!
O Nanak! by hearing the Sound Current, one glows with the Divine Light;
And rare indeed is the elect of the Guru who comes in contact with the Naam.
By hearing the Sound Current, the mind gets docile and one feels satiated;
By hearing the Sound Current, one feels perfectly contented and is rid of all ills:
By hearing the Sound Current, the Naam becomes fully manifested and one becomes Naam personified.[155]

GURU RAM DAS

When a person by hearing the Word arises in full consciousness, he begins to understand the Divine Will and conforms his living to His Plan. Hereafter, he has no will of his own, separate from that of his Creator. He now clearly sees the Cosmic Order moving in accordance with God's Plan, and he just a part of the center or hub around which all life revolves. Guru Nanak tells us of this state in stanzas twelve to fifteen of Jap Ji Sahib:

STANZA 12

None can describe the condition of one who has made God's Will his own:
Whoever tries to do so, must realize his folly.
No supply of paper, pen or scribe can ever describe the state of the Conscious Co-worker with the Divine Plan,
O Great is the Power of the Naam;
But few there be that know It.

STANZA 13

By practice of the Naam, one rises into Universal Consciousness and develops right understanding;
By practice of the Naam, one develops clairvoyance and transvision of the whole creation;
By practice of the Naam, one is freed from sorrow and suffering;

By practice of the Naam, one shall not go to *Yama** after his death.
O Great is the Power of the Naam,
But few there be that know It.

STANZA 14

By practice of the Naam, one speeds on to the higher spiritual planes unhindered;
By practice of the Naam, one gets into the spiritual planes openly and honorably;
By practice of the Naam, one escapes the bypaths of *Yama,* the angel of death;
By practice of the Naam, one gets in close touch with the Truth.
O Great is the Power of the Naam,
But few there be that know It.

STANZA 15

By practice of the Naam, one finally attains salvation;
By practice of the Naam, one leads one's kith and kin as well to freedom;
By practice of the Naam, one saves not only himself but, when he becomes an adept, many others whom he guides;
By practice of the Naam, one freed from desires escapes from the wheel of transmigration.
O Great is the Power of the Naam,
But few there be that know it.

*The angel of death; agent of the Lord of Judgment.

The state in which such persons remain is indescribable, being beyond the limitations of mind and intellect. The Divine contact, when established, makes one the knower of the Divine Plan and the working of the Divine Will. Hereafter he remains unattached and the mind and matter can have no effect on him; and at the time of death, his spirit quits the body as a matter of daily routine, as he has been doing in life, and the luminous form of the Guru escorts him on.

In his ascent to spiritual regions, there are no hurdles and no barriers. The magic of Naam works as an "Open Sesame" to him, enabling him to traverse any spiritual region he may like.

Sikh scriptures tell us:

By contact with the Naam, the entire family gains salvation and remains in comfort;
By contact with the Naam, the entire following gains merit when established therein;
By contact with the Naam, all the hearers get benefited by repetition thereof;
By contact with the Naam, all ills vanish and one feels satiated by constant remembrance;
O Nanak! they alone get contact with the Naam, who are contacted by a Master-soul.

By contact with Naam, the mind gets right understanding;
By contact with the Naam, egotism and lusts fall off;
By contact with the Naam, the Power of God becomes manifest;
By contact with the Naam, there comes in peace of Godhead;
O Nanak! Naam is a crest-jewel which only a true devotee of the Guru adores.[156]
By contact with the Naam, one rises in Pure Consciousness and gets absorbed therein;
By contact with the Naam, one becomes the abode of virtues and feels comforted;
By contact with the Naam, one escapes all delusions and never gets into trouble;
By contact with the Naam, one sings true praises of Truth and is washed of all sins.[157]

GURU RAM DAS

(iii) The practice of Naam awakens a person from a long-drawn sleep of ages to knowledge of the Self and knowledge of God.

Through the grace of the Master, one gets interested in Naam and is awakened from long slumber of ages.[158]

GURU ARJAN

By listening to the Naam, one gets to Self-knowledge and reaps the profit of God-knowledge. [159]

GURU RAM DAS

(iv) An absorption in Naam ultimately leads to union of the soul with the Over-soul, uniting them in indissoluble bonds, the former feeling this close association all the time. He himself is emancipated and so many more to whom he grants the boon of Naam.

Naam is the abode of all virtues and miraculous powers,
One easily gets to the fountain by devotion to the Lord.[160]
GURU RAM DAS

One merged in Naam lives in the light of God,
The worship of the Divine Light comes only through a Master.[161]
GURU AMAR DAS

With Naam in one's heart, all his works shape out of themselves. No more does he depend on the people of the world, for God does everything for him and resides with him.[162]
GURU ARJAN

(v) Naam brings in illumination and omniscience. By a contact with Naam, the Light of God dawns in the human soul, and one becomes truly blessed and attains his lost Godhead:

The Naam makes manifest the inner light and grants glory,

The Naam brings in beatitude and leads Godward.[163]
GURU AMAR DAS

Absorption in the Naam brings in Cosmic Awareness,
O Nanak! those who engage in the Naam are ever blissful.[164]
GURU NANAK

By Thy Grace whosoever is given contact with the Naam,
O Nanak! the Naam leads one to the *Turya* state.[165]
GURU ARJAN

(vi) Naam snaps all bondages and grants salvation:

O Nanak! Whatsoever is attached with Naam, the messengers of death cannot come near him.[166]

By listening to the Naam, ye get near the Truth and the messengers of death do not molest thee.[167]
GURU RAM DAS

He who engages in the practice of the Naam,
Not only saves himself but saves many another with him.[168]
GURU AMAR DAS

Naam hath made us fearless,
Naam hath taken us out of the gyres.[169]

O Nanak! he escapes the fires of hell,
Whose body and mind are saturated with the Naam. [170]

GURU ARJAN

One escapes all bondages and lives in Truth,
The Naam is a rare gift in this age and a Gurmukh (devotee) gets It.[171]

GURU AMAR DAS

Besides these, many other benefits can be derived from Naam. The mind gets satisfied and is no more swayed by desires. All worldly passions disappear, and the poison of the world and worldly objects and relations has no effect on one devoted to Naam. All his acts and deeds are performed in a spirit of detachment and hence have no longer any binding effect. Established in Truth, he becomes one with Truth and thus attains salvation. A devotee of the Naam is always dear to the Master.

O my friend, Gurmukh be thou ever engaged in Naam.
By devotion to Naam, thou shalt be blessed, keep It safe within thee;
Without Naam, one is just a leper, obsessed with blind infatuation,
Fruitless are all his acts and keep him in bondage.[172]
So long as thou livest, be thou devoted to Naam,

God escorts those on the Path and He takes them over in the end.[173]

GURU RAM DAS

In the Sikh scriptures, we very often come across sincere and earnest prayers for the attainment of Naam:

Satguru and *Sat Purush* is Godman indeed, and to Him I ever pray,
We worms, tiny and crawling, are yet Thine, O grant us the light of Naam.[174]

GURU RAM DAS

We wish for nothing else but the light of Thy Word,
O Master! the light that permeates in all hearts.[175]

GURU ARJAN

Those who have communed with the Naam, their toils shall end,
And their faces shall flame with glory,
Not only theirs shall be salvation, O Nanak! but many more shall find freedom with them.[176]

GURU NANAK

Hari Naam and Ram Naam

Naam is above everything. He is the Creator. There is nothing else besides Him, and He is immanent in all things. In the scriptures, Lord God is often described as Hari. "Hari" and "Naam"

are practically the same; "Hari" in action is Naam, and hence Hari Naam, i.e., Naam emanating from Hari. To bring this aspect of Naam into broad relief and for the proper understanding of It, the term "Hari Naam" is used in several places in the scriptures.

Again, Naam or the Power of God, call it what you will, is the creative Life Principle. It is all-pervading and is engaged in the work of creating and sustaining all that is visible and invisible. To bring home the idea of His Omnipresence or ubiquity, He is often described as "Ram Naam."

4. Hari Ras

Now we come to another term, "Hari Ras" or Divine intoxication. Whoever communes with the Word, Shabd or Naam feels an exhilarating effect, too sweet and too absorbing for words. Far from being inebriating and stupefying it raises one into a state of super-consciousness and universal awareness. The knowledge of the Word makes everything else known. Once a soul tastes of this sweet elixir, it cannot possibly leave it off, but wants to remain forever in touch with it.

> Nanak feels in him the intoxication of
> Naam, all the time.

Christ calls It the "Water of Life." The Muslim saints have described It as "Aab-i-Hayat" and the

Hindus as "Amrit" or the Water of Immortality. It has in It an enlivening effect for It makes the soul live through eternity. It is because of Its life-giving property that saints talk of It as "Maha Ras" or the highest type of "Ras" (intoxicating drink). While other drinks produce morbid sensitivity and cloud the reason and intellect, the nectar of Naam brings one into touch with Reality, whereby one comes to know the correct values of life:

There is no real charm on the plane of the senses;
Leave it aside, and drink ye the sweet elixir of life;
Without tasting this nectar one forfeits his human birth and is never really happy.[177]

GURU ARJAN

O Nanak! there is great sweetness in Naam, ye get to the Truth through a competent Master.[178]

GURU ANGAD

O Lord! grant me the sweet elixir of Naam. [179]

GURU ARJAN

Hari Ras: What It is

Hari Ras is the same as Naam or Anhad Bani. A touch with the Hari Ras is a touch with God. Those who do not get a contact with Hari Ras are

really unfortunate beings, and can never escape from the sway and the realm of Kal or Death.

How unfortunate they are who do not get Hari Ras and are ever in the clutches of Death.[180]

Hari purifies the sinners,
A disciplined soul gives contact with Hari Naam, And then one tastes the sweet elixir of life.[181]
GURU RAM DAS

Know ye of the Unending Song through the Word of the Master,
And enjoy ye the Hari Naam and the Hari Ras so sweet,
O Nanak! God Himself grants this contact for He is both the Cause and the Effect.[182]

By tasting the Hari Ras ye know the Reality,
O Nanak! those who commune with the Naam, they alone live.[183]
GURU AMAR DAS

It is a long story and an unending tale:

Whomsoever He uplifts, He offers this drink,
Then do they know the unending tale of His. [184]
GURU ARJAN

Whomsoever the Merciful One shows
mercy, He gives the boon of the
interminable story,
One gets the Hari Ras through the saints
and feels Its exhilarating influence in his
body and mind.[185]
GURU RAM DAS

It is Amrit (The Water of Immortality):

By devotion to the Master, one beholds the
Lord,
And getting the Water of Life one tastes the
Essence of God.[186]
GURU NANAK

A rare soul gets to this elixir of life,
Whosoever drinks of it, escapes death.[187]
GURU ARJAN

Hari Ras: Where It Is

In the sacred books of the various religions — the Vedas, the Smritis, and others — much praise has been bestowed on the Naam or Hari Ras. Water, water everywhere! but you have not a speck of it. You can see and taste its sweet elixir, if you invert. It is the Water of Life which is found in the temple of the body, and we can get to It by recession and withdrawal from the sensory plane. Emerson, the great American philosopher, advises us to "tap inside." Though this enlivening Spirit Current pervades everywhere, yet we cannot see

It until we develop our Divya Chakshu, the Inner Eye or the Single Eye as Christ calls it. For developing the inner vision we have to go inside, and this is why the sages and the seers always tell us to invert into the chamber of the mind. By reading the scriptures, we may develop a love for the Science of the Soul but cannot know its practical working nor have a taste of It.

> The study of the Vedas cannot give Hari Ras;
> Entangled in mind and matter, one talks and talks,
> The ignorant abide in darkness ever,
> The devotee of the Master knows the Truth and sings of Him.[188]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

Hari Ras is all-pervading and is ever rich in Its fullness everywhere, in all the regions high and low. Its sweet strains also reverberate on all sides. But the unfortunate can have no access to It.

> Hari Ras is all-pervasive but the unfortunate cannot have a taste of It.[189]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

Hari Ras is in the Temple of the Body:

> When the light of His feet abides in the heart, one tastes of the Hari Ras.[190]

Break through the bondage of delusion,
Then shalt thou see the wonder of wonders
and drink the nectar.[191]
GURU NANAK

Hari Ras is in Dasum Dwar (the tenth door) and when a soul rises above the nine portals of the body and transcends body consciousness, then it tastes this elixir:

The body is the temple of God,
You can deal in the commodity of Hari Ras.[192]
GURU RAM DAS

Nine are the portals of the body and all end in a *cul-de-sac* with no way to real happiness,
The tenth alone leads to a delectable plane where one may partake of the Water of Life.
Grant me, Thou the Merciful One, the gift of the Elixir of Life through the Word of the Master.

Hari Ras: How to get It

(a) Through the Grace of God: God is the Water of Life and He is not apart from His own Essence, and it is He who may grant the gift of His own life stream, to whomsoever He may like.

The Beloved is Himself the Amrit — the sweet elixir, and the life thereof,
The Beloved Himself hears His own prayer,
His beloved, O Nanak, gets to His sweet elixir.[193]

GURU RAM DAS

The wind bloweth where it listeth and so doth the Will and Pleasure of God.

It is His glance of Grace that bestows the Hari Ras,
O Nanak! through Hari Ras sing of the greatness of Hari.[194]

GURU RAM DAS

Hari Ras comes to him to whomsoever He granteth, and the tongue delighteth in His praises,
By devotion to Naam, one lives ever in peace and remains absorbed therein.[195]

GURU AMAR DAS

(b) Through one's good fortune:

A rare devotee of the Master tastes of the Hari Ras,
And lives in perpetual peace and ecstasy,
This one gets if he be fortunate enough.[190]

GURU AMAR DAS

The Manna of Hari Ras is a great detaching factor,

Fortunate is he who gets this heavenly food.[197]
I have got an access to Hari Ras and I am now devoted to Hari with the grace of the Master,
It is my own good luck that I am now living a life like this.[198]
GURU RAM DAS

(c) Through the Master of Truth: It is with the grace of God that one comes across a Satguru and thereby is initiated with the Hari Ras, which in turn provides food to the soul, on which the soul thrives from day to day.

This Hari Ras one gets through a mighty good fortune,
And he finds It who meets a Satguru,
O Nanak! one forgets all the dull dross of the world,
When Hari comes to abide in the mind.[199]

A meeting with a Satguru is extremely auspicious,
As He implants Naam and one gets bread of Hari Ras.[200]

O Saints, how may I find the Lord, by Whose glance of grace I may get enlivened?
Without the Lord I cannot live; O contact me with the Guru that I may drink the Water of life.[201]

Through the compassion of the Satguru, I have got the bread of love,
With the Hari Ras in me, I have lost all other appetites.[202]

Hari Ras is extremely sweet and all absorbing,
The soul that tastes of It becomes dead to all outside and loses all other appetites.[203]

GURU AMAR DAS

(d) Through the grace of a Master-soul:

Through the grace of a Master-soul one gets the Hari Ras,
O Nanak! it is by contacting the Naam that one is saved.[204]

GURU AMAR DAS

Hari Ras is a pure gift of the Master,
By remembrance of Hari, one can safely cross over.[205]

GURU RAM DAS

(e) Through the holy congregation:

I have got access to Hari Ras through the holy congregation,
O Nanak! such a soul is truly blessed.[206]

GURU ARJAN

In the holy congregation there is Hari Ras,

A Master-soul drives away the fear of death.[207]

GURU NANAK

One gets to the holy congregation through high merit,
And gains Hari Ras therein.[208]

GURU RAM DAS

(f) Through acceptance of the Divine Will:

By devotion to the Master, one accepts the Divine Will,
And quaffs the nectar of life freely.[209]

GURU NANAK

Hari Ras: Who gets It

A rare devotee of the Master, one who truly loves the Master, is able to get the Hari Ras. But all others being slaves of the mind and the senses remain far removed from It:

O! the Hari Ras is extremely refreshing and sweet,
Through devotion to the Guru, a rare soul gets to It.[210]

GURU ARJAN

A rare devotee of the Master tastes of the Hari Ras,
He lives in perpetual bliss all the time,
One gets to It through great good fortune.[211]

GURU AMAR DAS

Now the five senses do not fly about,
Blessed is the tree that is laden with the life-giving fruit,
By devotion to the Master, one lives in eternal peace,
And all the time sings of God and partakes of the Manna.[212]

GURU NANAK

A slave of the senses knows not the taste of Hari Ras,
Tormented as he is by the thorns and thistles of I-ness.[213]

The mind-ridden are lost through evil propensities and know not of Hari Ras,
Living in delusion, they throw away *Amrit* for a pot of porridge.[214]

A slave of the senses cannot taste the Hari Ras,
Bloated with I-ness, he is dogged by misfortunes.[215]

GURU RAM DAS

Hari Ras is sweeter than the sweetest thing in the world; and those who taste of it fully but once, altogether lose an appetite for all else and thereafter become dead to the world and live a life of perfect contentment:

One may have all beauty and many wives to enjoy,
But without Hari Ras, all else is insipid.[216]

Those who once taste of the Hari Ras,
They are never bewildered by the trash.[217]

If ye were to taste of the Hari Ras,
A mere taste of It shall make thee intoxicated.[218]

GURU ARJAN

The devotees of the Lord prefer Hari Ras to everything else. It is peerless and unique in all respects.

The riches of all the mountains and the seas of the world put together,
Hold out no attraction to the devotee of the Lord, who prefers Hari Ras to everything else.[219]

GURU RAM DAS

Rishis and munis like Sankadek, Brahma, Sukh Dev and Prehlad, by drinking the Hari Ras, reached the highest spiritual attainment:

All sages and seers, Sankadek, Sukh Dev, Brahma and Prehlad sing of Hari Ras,
They drank of the elixir of life and attained union with the Lord, O Nanak.[220]

GURU ARJAN

Hari Ras: Its merits

Hari Ras appears in the form of ripples in the Ocean of Naam. When the divine melodies become manifest, a soul is enraptured by the sweet strains and remains immersed in a state of perpet-

ual intoxication. The love of the world and what is worldly drops off automatically. The Muslim divines have often tried to compare this with the effect of vintage wines because it momentarily makes one forgetful of the world around:

With Hari Ras, one remains in Divine ecstasy all the time,
The love of the erstwhile charms suddenly fade away,
A draught of Hari Ras is enough to bring in intoxication,
The rest instantly becomes a heap of trash.[221]

O God! my mind is all intoxicated,
Seeing the Merciful, I am in perfect bliss,
And ever drink the exhilarating Hari Ras.[222]

GURU ARJAN

As this wine of divine love comes from the Master or Murshid, he is often described in poetical language as "Saqi" or the Divine Cup-bearer. Hafiz, a great mystic poet, says:

O Saqi! Give me that wine which one cannot find even in paradise.

Bhai Nand Lal also prayed:

O Saqi! Give me a cup bubbling over with the sparkling wine,
Wine that would at once give me intoxication and solve for me all mysteries.

Hari Ras offers us countless benefits. With Hari Ras one escapes all the sins and sorrows of the world. The inner egotism is cut off root and branch. The intellect gets sharpened and the lotus of the mind takes its proper position. The practice of Hari Ras leads to concentrated meditation, and one easily crosses over the ocean of the world and attains salvation or liberation once for all from the bondage of mind and matter, and then enters in and inherits the kingdom of God, now a lost domain to him.

> Let everyone take such a Hari Ras,
> That is perfectly Divine in its richness. [228]
>
> GURU ARJAN

Guru Naam or Gurmukh Naam

We have just a couple more terms to consider in this connection which are allied and convey just the same thing. As the current of Naam or the Sound Principle is made manifest by the Guru or Master, it is often called *Guru Naam* or the Word of the Master; *Gurmukh Naam* or the Word, the exposition whereof is given by the Master, or *Gurmat Naam* — the Word that is made audible by following the instructions of the Master. A real devotee of the Master can get to It through the grace of the Guru, and there is no other way to It. All these terms denote the hidden or inaudible Sound Current that is made both manifest and

audible by the Master who, at the time of initiation, gives full and detailed description of the process of inversion through self-analysis by practicing which, from day to day, one can develop his spiritual experience to any length he may like.

5. Conclusion

Disadvantages of not contacting the holy Naam

(1) Without Naam we are dead to true values of life:

> He alone wakes up to the Reality whom God may so desire and meditates on the Word of the Master.
> O Nanak! they indeed are dead who do not commune with Naam, only a devotee doth live.[224]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

> The peerless human body is cast by virtuous deeds, and they that contact not the Naam destroy their very self,
> Why do they not die who forget the Naam, for without the Naam human life is of no value.[225]
>
> GURU ARJAN

(2) Without Naam one is blind and is being cheated:

Without the Naam-contact all your attachments are valueless, for nothing shall abide with you,
Whatever you see around you is nothing but delusive matter that keeps you in bondage.[226]

All pleasures and all delights are mere delusions,
O Nanak! precious is the Naam; they that get not the Naam lose their life in vain.[227]
GURU ARJAN

(3) Without Naam nothing is of any avail:

All flesh is useful in one way or another, but useless is the man who contacts not the Naam.[228]
With all the enjoyments of the world one never feels satiated,
Ever consumed in invisible fires, all endeavors without Naam prove infructuous.[229]
GURU ARJAN

(4) Without Naam one loses his respect for the self:

Without Naam, one becomes a black sheep,
And leads an accursed life of no consequence. [230]
GURU RAM DAS

All through the ages, one without the Naam wallows in the dirt,
Devoid of devotion, he has neither glory nor respect,
Forgetful of the Naam, he passes his days in sorrowful tears.[231]

GURU NANAK

(5) Without Naam one becomes an abode of all afflictions:

Always sing the praises of God, and thy sorrows shall vanish,
By forgetting the Naam, O Nanak! one is beset with difficulties.[232]

GURU ARJAN

(6) Without Naam one gets drenched in materialism and is ever in affliction:

It is better by far to sterilize the mother's womb than to produce children with no love for the Naam,
Their bodies are all hollow without contact with the Naam and they live and die a malingering death.[233]

Ever burdened with desires and wishes,
One lives a deserted life without Naam.[234]

GURU RAM DAS

Enslaved to the mind and the senses, one contacts not the Naam and is ever in pain and affliction,

Without contact between the spirit and the Naam, how can one have peace.[235]

GURU AMAR DAS

Everyone in the world is a unique gambler,
He wishes for all the joy at the cost of the Naam.[236]

GURU NANAK

(7) Without Naam one is leprous and in the clutches of death:

Whomsoever Thou bestoweth the gift of the Naam, is the King of Kings,
O Satguru, one without this precious gift is ever in the gyres.[237]

Ever engaged in the delights of the world, ye remember not the Lord,
O Nanak! by forgetting the Naam, one forever comes and goes.[238]

GURU ARJAN

(8) Without Naam all are of low birth and remain in distress:

By devotion one rises in the scales of life, and acquires merit through the Word,
Without contacting the Naam, all are at the lowest rung of the creation and are filthy worms.[239]

All real glory in the world comes through the Naam, and without It there is none,

The worldly glory is but a passing phase,
and cannot last long.[240]
GURU AMAR DAS

(9) Life without the Naam is a sheer waste:

Forgetting the Word, one wanders in delusions,
Leaving the roots, one clutches at the leaves and gets nothing.[241]
GURU NANAK

Drunk deep in love for the self and the children,
O Nanak! without the Naam, existence is a wasteland.[242]
GURU ARJAN

One returns not to see his children, friends and the household,
Kabir saith: without contacting the Naam, life goes in vain.[243]
KABIR

(10) The giant wheel of life ever moves on for those who do not take to the Naam:

Why hast thou forgotten the All-pervading Naam,
With the decay and the dissolution of the body one has ever to deal with the god of Death.[244]
GURU TEG BAHADUR

Forget not the Lord or else you will fall into the clutches of Death,
In the end of the life's journey, O ignorant one, the minions of death shall torment thee.[245]

GURU NANAK

O Kabir! all the enjoyments of the world, betel leaves, tobacco, and others,
Shall combine to land thee in the domain of Death without the aid of Naam.[248]

KABIR

(11) Without Naam one is in misery:

The Naam is the only companion after death, and without It, there is the bondage of Death.[247]

All cunning and cleverness prove futile and one departs with tearful eyes,
O Nanak! by forgetting the Naam, one gets no relief at His door.[248]

GURU NANAK

He alone suffers from penury and want, saith Kabir,
Who has in his heart no love for the Naam.[249]

KABIR

BOOK TWO

Shabd

The Sound Principle

Shabd

IN SANSKRIT "Shabd" is a root but we do not know its construction, as with other words. It means awaz (sound), akhar (word), kalam (talk), Ism (name), zamir (essence), bachan (spoken word), wazahat (exposition), sarahat (clarity), izhar (expression), taqrir (speech), etc. Whatever is spoken or heard is Shabd, and it reveals the real nature of things and explains the hidden reality or mystery thereof. But in the terminology of the saints, the term "Shabd" has a much deeper significance, quite different from its commonly accepted meaning.

Shabd is God and is live principle

Before the creation, Shabd existed in its latent form and as such had no name. In this state, It was something completely established in Itself and was thus known as Ashabd (sound-less), Anaam (nameless), Alakh (ununderstandable), Agam (inconceivable), Akeh (unutterable) and Akath (indescribable). When It came into manifestation, It was called "Shabd" or "Naam."

Shabd when hidden was Anaam,
Shabd in manifestation became Naam.

SWAMI SHIVDAYAL SINGH

Before its manifestation, there was no form whatsoever; nor was there any sun, nor moon, nor sky, nor earth, for then the Shabd existed by Itself in a formless state. The essence of Shabd is Pure Consciousness. It is the active life-principle of the whole creation. It is the Guiding and Controlling Power behind all that exists. All manifestation is the result of Shabd, and without It nothing exists. It is the very life-essence of everything. The Muslim divines call it Jauhar (essence) and the Hindu saints describe It as Mul (the root cause). It is the vital principle immanent in every form and permeating all, the visible and the invisible. It is the Causeless Cause, the eternal self-existing life, running endlessly in and out of time. It is the very soul of the Creative Power, all pervading even to the purely spiritual realm — Sat Lok. Shabd is the primal cause of both birth and dissolution.

> Both birth and death come about by Shabd,
> Rebirth too is because of Shabd.[1]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

Everything from beginning to end exists in Shabd. The physical elements, the subtle and ethereal powers and vibrations, the causal seeds and essences, one and all are from Shabd and nothing but Shabd personified. We live and have our very being in Shabd and ultimately dissolve into Shabd. All the scriptures of the world tell us that Shabd is above the material and efficient cause and all controlling Power of the universe.

He is all in all Himself and revels in His creation by supporting it by Shabd.[2]

GURU NANAK

There is none like Thee in the entire creation,
In Thy Word Thou art manifesting Thyself.
Whatever Thou wishest, that comes to pass.[3]

GURU RAM DAS

Shabd: What It is

The subject of Shabd is such that we cannot do justice to it by discursive reasoning. All that can be said is that "Shabd" implies the Power of God that has created and is sustaining the various grand divisions, divisions, and sub-divisions of the vast creation of God. It is a current from the Ocean of Consciousness and is characterized by Sound-vibration, or in other words, It is a live and active principle which, emanating from God, is enlivening all creation. It is the instrument with which God creates, controls, and sustains His vast universe. It acts as a life-line between the Creator and His creation, and serves as a golden bridge between the two. The divine currents, like the ethereal waves of a radio, are spread out in the atmosphere in all the directions of the compass, giving out delectable strains of music. We, however, cannot catch the ethereal vibrations and listen to the divine melody until we get in tune with

the Infinite by adjusting our mental apparatus. Therefore we become etherealized more and more as we come in tune with the heavenly music. Shabd is the connecting link between God and man. In brief, Shabd alone is the true religion — a binding force that rebinds us to our Source. All the powers of Nature depend on, and work through, this Shabd or the Sound Principle. The Pranas or the vital airs, that are the source of all energy — electrical, mechanical, magnetic or atomic — and are the most active agents in the physical material plane, are but an outer manifested form of the Shabd. Like the electric waves with which the whole atmosphere is charged, Shabd in its most subtle form pervades everywhere in Its fullness, and is thus the Creator. Guru Nanak, in the *Jap Ji*, has called It Hukam and describes Its working:

All things are manifestations of His Will,
But His Will is beyond description.
By His Will is matter quickened into life,
By His Will is greatness obtained.
By His Will some are born high and others
low,
By His Will (the impious) wander in
endless transmigration.
All exists under His Will,
And nothing stands outside.
One attuned with His Will, O Nanak,
is wholly free from ego.[4]

Shabd is of two kinds: outer and inner or Varn-Atmak and Dhun-Atmak, respectively. The Varn-Atmak to a certain extent gives a clue to the Dhun-Atmak Shabd. It is a matter of common experience how martial music stirs up men to arms, sad dirges bring tears to the eyes, loving strains bewitch the mind, doleful songs strike the spirit, and solemn notes inspire awe and reverence. Again, the words of the wise act as a soothing balm for lacerated minds, and smarting taunts cut us to the quick.

Words there be that cut the very heart-strings,
And words may lead to profound renunciation,
Words may work as soothing balm or may strike misery,
Some of them inspire hope and others engender helplessness.

KABIR

What passion cannot Music raise and quell.

DRYDEN

When there is so much magic in Varn-Atmak Shabd, one cannot possibly imagine the Power that lies hidden in the Dhun-Atmak Shabd, which is very subtle and ethereal in nature. The inner Shabd is sublime and pure, with an irresistible magnetic pull which a freed soul cannot but plunge into.

Shabd is the Creator

In all the religious scriptures, "Shabd" is stated to be the Creator of the Universe. The *Vedas* tell us that "Nad" brought into being fourteen Bhavans or regions. In the *Koran*, it is mentioned that "Kalma" created fourteen tabaqs or divisions. St. John, in his Gospel, has written that "Word" is the root cause of the creation.

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him: and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and life was the light of men.[5]. . .

The sacred Sikh scriptures also tell of the same thing — the entire manifestation has sprung from "Shabd" and is being maintained by Him. The sun, the sky, the earth and the heavens, all are within His Controlling Power and there is no place where He is not. The immanence of Shabd is all pervasive.

> Shabd is the directive agent of God,
> And is the cause of all creation.[6]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

The earth and the sky were made by Shabd,
Shabd has been the source of all light.
The whole creation sprang from Shabd,
O Nanak! Shabd is the very life of life.[7]

Having set up everything, He beheld His
own imprint therein,
He established the beautiful earth and the
starry welkin,
He raised the tabernacle of heaven with no
pillars to support.
He created the sun and the moon with all the
starry host and His light is pervading all.[8]

GURU NANAK

Again, "Shabd" is not only the Creator but He is the Destroyer also, and the rebirth of the creation takes place through Him.

Both the creation and the dissolution are
from Shabd,
And Shabd again is the cause of
re-creation.[9]

GURU AMAR DAS

In the Hindu scriptures, It is described as the essence of ether, which goes to show that It is more subtle than ether and is all-pervading. Its presence, in fact, is felt in the union of matter and spirit, for every union implies vibration and vibration is caused by Shabd or Sound — the active life-principle permeating all space, nay receding far back into Itself; for God too is

described as "Shabd," as the Power of God (Shabd) is not distinct and separate from God: God and Godhood (God-in-action) always go together.

> Thy "Shabd" is Thyself and whatever Thou ordaineth that comes to pass.[10]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

All the religious books, including the *Vedas*, the oldest of them, have described "Shabd" as the primal manifest form of God. In Sama Veda we have,

> Shabd is *Brahm* and "Silence" too is *Brahm*,
> *Brahm* alone is vibrating everywhere.

The Mohammedan divines tell us that the world owes its very life and existence to Shabd. Shamas Tabrez says:

> World came into being through *Saut*
> (Shabd or Sound Principle).
> And from *Saut* spread all light.

Again Abdul Razaq Kashi tells us,

> The Great Name *(ism-i-azam)* is the very essence and life of all names.
> Its manifested form (Shabd) is supporting the entire creation,
> It is the great sea in which we all appear as waves.

He alone can understand this mystery who belongs to our order.

Shabd is not the subject of reading, ritual or reciting

The Inner Sound Principle is All-Conscious and too subtle for the ears, the tongue and the pen. It is an Unwritten Law and an Unspoken Language. It is self-existing, self-sustaining and self-supporting, and yet is the very life of all that exists both in the animate and inanimate creation. But It can be realized in the deepest depths of the soul, for the two are of the same essence; the soul being but a drop of the Ocean of All-Consciousness. In the Sikh scriptures, It is also called "Sacha Shabd" or the True Word:

With the True Word, one knows the Truth,
With the True Sound, one sings the glory of the Lord.[11]

GURU NANAK

Meditate on the feet of the Master, and leaving aside all thy cleverness, be absorbed in the True Word.[12]
Remember the Lord, O dear friend,
And ever love the True Word.[13]

GURU ARJAN

It can be seen without eyes,
It can be heard without ears.[14]

GURU NANAK

Lao Tze speaks of It:

> The Tao that can be expressed is not the eternal Tao;
> The name that can be defined is not the unchanging Name.[15]

Maulana Rumi says:

> The Turks, Kurds, Parsis, Goans and Arabs,
> They have all known It without the aid of lips and ears.

The Upanishadic sages have described It as "Pranav" or that which can be heard through the pranic vibrations, without the help of tongue, lips and palate, for It is reverberating of Itself in and out of space.

Sant Kabir has called It "Videh" for It is above the realm of physical existence and can be apprehended by the soul when it is unclogged from bodily raiment.

> All sing of the Shabd without realizing that It is *Videh* or the Bodiless,
> No tongue can describe It, but soul may contact It within.
>
> KABIR

Hazrat Bahu says in this context:

> Everyone repeats the *Kalma* orally, by word of mouth,

A rare soul may repeat It with the tongue
of thought;
And whoever repeats It within with loving
devotion,
He cannot describe it in words.

Again,

My Master has taught me a lesson, a lesson
that goes on repeating Itself,
And is heard in the ears without the aid of
stop-cocks.

Maulana Rumi has beautifully described It:

O God, lead my soul to that blessed place,
wherein the symphonies flow.

All religions teach of Shabd

In all religious books we find references to Shabd or the Creative Sound Current: Hindu scriptures speak of It as Shabd Brahm and Ashabd Brahm or Nad, that is responsible for the creation of the world. The ancient sages and seers sang of It in their songs, and called It *Shruti*, meaning "that which is heard." The esoteric teachings were passed on from Master to disciple, and the Word was made manifest individually after years of spiritual discipline. In the Upanishadic Age, it came to be known as Udgit or Song of the Beyond, meaning at once of the other world (spiritual) and

beyond the senses, for senses could not comprehend It, and one had to transcend them to catch Its strains.[16] Other words that also came into use for It are Pranav and Aum, for It could be heard in the mental ears alone and could be sung with the pranic vibrations without any outer aid of tongue or lips. In Chapter 6 of the Maitreya Upanishad it is stated that there are two Brahms, one Shabd Brahm and the other Ashabd Brahm, and to reach Ashabd Brahm, one has to meditate, in the first instance, on the Shabd Brahm which has different kinds of Sounds that can be heard within by stop-cocking the ears with the thumbs; and by this means one can cross over to the Ashabd or Gupt Brahm, a state beyond the three Gunas and the three mental conditions, and called Turiya Pad or super-sensual plane.

In Yog-Sandhya,[17] it is enjoined that a yogin, practicing yogic disciplines, ought to close his ears with the thumbs and listen within him to the musical strains of the Chidakash or mental horizon and thereby still the mind and attain the Turiya state and merge in the Avyakat.

In Chhandogya Upanishad[18] it is mentioned that Nad (heavenly music) springs from the Universal Sun (of Brahmand), and that this secret was given by Ingris Rishi to Krishna, the darling son of Devki.

Guru Amar Das tells us, in Rag Bhairon, that Bhakt Prehlad was saved by Shabd:

> It (Shabd) has been the saving lifeline in all the ages,
> Prehlad, the son of the demon-king,
> knew neither *Gayatri* nor any rituals,
> He became one with God through contact with the Shabd.[19]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

In *Gita* it is said,

> Though under the sway of the senses, one feels drawn toward God by force of the habit acquired in previous births; nay, even the seeker of enlightenment transcends the *Shabd Brahm.*

> The yogi, however, who diligently takes up this practice, attains perfection in this very life with the help of latencies of many births and being thoroughly purged of sin, forthwith reaches the supreme goal.[20]

In the Nad-bind Upanishad,[21] we find,

> A yogin ought to sit in *Sidha Asan* (a yogic posture), and adopting *Vaishnavi Mudra,* should hear within him the "Sound" coming from the right side.

In Yog Sandhya, an elaborate account is given of the practice of "hearing the Shabd."

In the Rig Veda[22] and the Atharv Veda[23] there are hymns in praise of Shabd. In Hans Upanishad of the latter it is given that one who does japa of the Hans Mantra millions of times, comes to the realization of Nad. It is also stated that Nad consists of ten different types of melodies, nine of which are to be passed over, and the tenth, which resembles the sound of the thunder of distant clouds, is to be meditated upon and practiced, for It takes one to Par-Brahm.

In Hath Yog Pradipka[24] there are many Shlokas in praise of Shabd. In the Vedas It is spoken of as Nad and Akash Bani (Voice of Heaven). In the Buddhist scriptures It is referred to as Sonorous Light or Flaming Sound.

The ancient Greeks also spoke of Shabd. In the writings of Socrates we read that he heard within him a peculiar Sound which pulled him irresistibly to higher spiritual realms. Pythagoras also talked of Shabd. Plato spoke of It as the "Music of the Spheres." In the Greek language we have the term logos, from "logo," to speak, which stands for the "Word" or Second Person of the Trinity. This term logos also figures in both Hebrew and Christian philosophy and theology and in its mystic sense is used both by the Hellenistic and Neo-platonist philosophies. St. John has used the

term "Word." It is a Sound Principle (Shabd) emanating from the Great Silence (Ashabd). In Chinese scriptures It is known as Tao. Lao Tze, in the fourth century B.C., used the word Tao meaning "Road" or "Way" to denote the Hidden Principle of the Universe.

In the Avestic writings of Zoroaster, the Persian prophet of life, we come across the word Sraosha, which stands for the angel of inspiration that inspires the Universe. It is a Power apart from the six spiritual Powers of which Zoroaster speaks. It is the cult of Eternal Life and is from the Sanskrit root "Shru" (to hear) and means that Power of God which can be heard. In the Zend Avesta, we have an invocation to Mazda praying for the gift of Sraosha for those whom He loves. It is the same as Shabd in the terminology of the saints.

In our own times from Sant Kabir and Guru Nanak down to Guru Gobind Singh, the ten Sikh Gurus, Dadu, Jagjiwan, Tulsi, Darya Sahib, Baba Lal Das, Paltu, and many others preached of Shabd.

Many of the references to this subject in the Judaeo Christian tradition have been given above, in Book One.

Madam Blavatsky, the founder of the Theosophical Society, has described It as the "Voice of God." In the Masonic Order we hear of It as

the "Lost Word" in search of which the Mason Masters set up their Order.

In the Koran, there is an Ayat, "God commanded and it was done," Kun-feu-Kun. This, in fact, is the *Kalma* of the Muslims.

The Sufis, an Order of Muslim mystics, call it *Vadan*. It is said:

> If the *Anaam* (Nameless) had not wished to manifest Himself and become Naam, there would have been no "Sound" and no Universe.

Hazrat Inayat Khan, a modern Sufi mystic, tells us that this creation is nothing but the "Music of God" for It is the outcome or manifestation of His Power. He calls it *Saute Sarmadi* or the intoxicating vintage from the Garden of Allah (God) and has given an elaborate description of It, as appears from the following account:

> All space is filled with *Saute Sarmad* or the "Abstract Sound." The vibrations of this Sound are too fine to be either audible or visible to the material ears or eyes, since it is even difficult for the eyes to see the form and colour of the ethereal vibrations on the external plane. It was the *Saute Sarmad,* the Sound of the abstract, which Mohammed heard in the cave, Ghar-e-Hira, when he became lost in his ideal. The Koran refers to

this Sound in the words: "Be and all became" *(Kun-feu-Kun).* Moses heard this very Sound on Mount Sinai *(Koh-i-Toor),* when in communion with God. The same Word was audible to the Christ when absorbed in his Heavenly Father in the wilderness. Shiva heard the same *Anahad Naad* during his *Samadhi* in the Himalayas. The flute of Krishna is symbolic of the same Sound allegorically explained. This Sound is the source of all revelation to the Masters to whom It is revealed from within and it is, therefore, that they know and teach the one and the same Truth.

The knower of the mystery of the Sound knows the mystery of the whole Universe. Whosoever has followed the strains of this Sound has forgotten all earthly distinctions and differences; and has reached the same goal of Truth in which all the Blessed Ones of God unite. Space is within the body as well as around it; in other words the body is in space and space is in the body.

This being the case, the Sound of the Abstract is always going on within, around and about man. Man does not hear It as a rule, because his consciousness is entirely centered in his material existence. Man becomes so absorbed in his experiences in the external world through the medium of the

physical body that space, with all its wonders of Light and Sound, appears to him blank . . . The limited volume of earthly sound is so concrete, that it dims the effect of the Sound of the Abstract to the sense of hearing; although in comparison to It the sounds of the earth are like that of a whistle to a drum. When the Abstract Sound is audi-ble, all other sounds become indistinct to the mystic.

The Sound of the Abstract is called *Anhad* in the Vedas, meaning unlimited sound. The Sufis name It *Sarmad,* which suggests the idea of intoxication. The word intoxication is here used to signify upliftment, the freedom of the soul from Its earthly bondage. Those who are able to hear the *Saute Sarmad* and meditate on It are relieved from all worries, anxieties, fears and diseases; and the soul is freed from captivity in the senses and in the physical body. The soul of the listener becomes All-pervading Consciousness; and his spirit becomes the battery which keeps the whole Universe in motion. . . .

This Sound develops through ten different aspects because of Its manifestation through the different tubes of the body *(Nadis);* it sounds like thunder, the roaring of the sea, the jingling of bells, running water, the buzzing of bees, the twittering

of sparrows, the Vina, the whistle, or the sound of *Shankha* (Conch) until it finally becomes *Hu* the most sacred of all sounds. This Sound *Hu,* is the beginning and end of all sounds, be they from man, bird, beast, or thing.

THE MYSTICISM OF SOUND

In the Muslim scriptures, It is variously described as *Kalam-i-Ilahi* (The Voice of God), *Nida-i-Asmani* (the Sound from Heaven), *Ism-i-Azam* (the Great Name), *Saut-i-Sarmadi* (the Intoxicating Sound), *Saut-i-Nasira* (the Sound Melodious), *Kalam-i-Majid* (the Great Commandment) and *Kalam-i-Haq* (the Voice of Truth) which can be heard inside, and It was taught as *Sultan-ul-Azkar* or the King of prayers. We have innumerable references to this Sound in the teachings of the Mohammedan fakirs:

Rise above thy mental horizon, O brave soul,
And listen to the call of Music coming from above.

MAULANA RUMI

The whole world is reverberating with Sound,
To listen to It thou must unseal thine inner ears,
Then shalt thou hear an Unending Music,
And that shall lead thee beyond the confines of death.

SHAH NIAZ

An unceasing Sound is floating down from
the heaven,
I wonder how ye are engaged in pursuits
of no avail.

HAFIZ

Drive away all scepticism from thy mind,
And listen to the strains of heavenly music,
And receive within thee the messages of
God,
For these come only by holy communion
with the self.

The Prophet declared that he heard the
Voice of God,
And it fell on his ears as clearly as any
other sound,
But God has sealed thy ears,
And so ye listen not to His Voice.

MAULANA RUMI

About the Prophet Mohammed it is said[25] that at the age of forty he began receiving messages from God, after he had for fifteen years practiced communion with Awaz-Mustqim (Anhad Shabd or the Ceaseless Word), and had seen the glimpses of Truth (flashes of heavenly light) for seven years. At one time he remained for two years in the cave of Hira in meditation.

It is further stated that the prophet practiced in the cave of Hira for six years, the Sultan-ul-Azkar (Surat Shabd Yoga), and that Hazrat Abdul Qadir

Jillani did the same for twelve years in that sacred cave.[26]

All the Sikh Gurus and other saints, time and again, taught this very thing in very clear terms. Guru Nanak spoke thus:

With stone-deaf ears thou hast lost all thy wits,
For thou hast not got contact with the *Shabd,*
And by slavery to the Mind thou hast forfeited thy human birth;
Without the Master-soul, one remains blind to the Reality.[27]

GURU NANAK

Hundreds of moons and thousands of suns may illumine the world,
But without a Master-soul, they fail miserably to dispel the darkness of the human mind.
Without contact with Shabd, one remains stark blind and deaf,
Of what avail is their life in this world?
They get not the Water of Life and escape not the endless cycle of births.[28]

GURU AMAR DAS

Practice ye the Word of the Master,
For one knows the Reality through the Word.[29]

GURU RAM DAS

Without the Master, there is no holy
congregation,
Without the Word one cannot know the
Reality.[30]

GURU AMAR DAS

From the above it is sufficiently clear that all Master-souls, whether Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and countless others, were conversant with the practice of the Word, though they did not necessarily expound it as a regular science. Most of them tell of Anhad Shabd only, leading up to Und and Brahmand or the subtle and cosmic regions. But perfect saints, irrespective of whether they belonged to one religion or the other, have gone even beyond this and have spoken of Sar Shabd and Sat Shabd as well, and of regions beyond Brahmand (Par-Brahmand, i.e., Sach Khand, Alakh and Agam Deshas).

Shabd signifies Sound Principle

What is the sound and how is sound produced, are the natural questions in this context. Some say that sound is produced when two things strike, one against the other. Others say that where there is vibration, there is sound. It is, of course, true that sound does follow concussion and vibration. But the Sound of which the saints speak is different from what we ordinarily mean in common parlance. It is something very subtle and is

characterized by Consciousness as exhibited in fecundity and growth principles. It is the very life of life that permeates in all things, visible and invisible. It is an active and live agent of God-head and may briefly be described as God-in-action. This Sound Principle is Jnana or the real knowledge of the Rishis of old, the Cult of Eternal Life of Zoroaster, Logos of the Greeks, Tao of the Chinese, Budhi or enlightenment of Gautama, and Sphota or Sound-essence of the philosophers.

> *Dhun* or the Sound Current is both true knowledge and true meditation and remains indescribable all the same.[31]
>
> GURU NANAK

This Sound is in Its fullness in everything, though the measure of Its manifestation may vary from one thing to another. It is even in stones and wood, apparently insensate things. The fact is that all things in Nature are of atoms, and atoms are full of energy as the phrase "atomic energy" denotes. It is because of this energy that the atoms are always in a state of motion and as they vibrate, a natural rhythmic sound is produced. Recent researches in science testify to this truth.* "Change" is the law of life, and it does follow vibration and motion, all of which ultimately depend on the Sound Principle working in space and out of space.

*Cf. Andrews, Donald Hatch, "The Harmonic Dimensions of Nature," MAIN CURRENTS *In Modern Thought,* Vol. 11, No. 5 , May 1955.

Every second, every minute and every hour,
the world is in a state of continuous flux.

Scientists have found that even the mighty Himalayas are growing from age to age. The growth may be imperceptible, but surely it is there — it may be a fraction of an inch in the course of a century or so. Thus all things in Nature are characterized by vibration of rhythmic movement, and this in itself implies the presence therein of the Sound Principle, whether the things are moving visibly or not. This Sound Principle is the essence or "Jauhar" of one life in all things.

Things full or empty are yet filled with
Music,
See! how the sound comes from out of the
drum.

This Sound Principle is all-pervading and is the very soul of all that exists. This current of life-consciousness is so subtle that It cannot be heard unless one acquires transcendental hearing. A mystic has beautifully described It as follows:

Dry are the strings, the wooden body and
the stretched leather,
How do they give out the divine melodies?

Sound or Word is in fact the Creator of the Universe. All this manifestation is because of Him.

Had not the Nameless assumed a name,
The world would not have come into being.

The beloved Lord God has been calling us back from time out of mind, but the pity is that we do not attend to Him.

My friend is ever in converse with thee,
What a pity! ye listen not to the ancient call.

SHAH NIAZ

The Sound of the Friend or Beloved (God) is reverberating everywhere. A Muslim mystic poet says of It:

All the seven heavens are echoing with the Sound,
The ignorant do not hear It nor catch the strains.

HAFIZ

By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see and shall not perceive.[32]

CHRIST

The Sound is by Itself and of Itself. In the material or physical region and materio-spiritual realms (Pind and Und), It is mixed up with and enclosed by matter. The Master makes It manifest in the Sukhman or Shah Rag in the region of the forehead.

Hear ye the Music in the *Sukhman*, and get absorbed in the unending song.

Again,

And thine ears shall hear a Word behind thee saying, this is the Way, Walk ye in It, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.[33]

ISAIAH

For spiritual knowledge and self-realization, the practice of the Sound Current (Shugal-i-Naghma-i-yazdani) is very necessary, for it is by hearing the Divine Music that the soul is pulled out of the material and mental clogs of the body and is led to higher spiritual regions from where the Sound, whose reverberations are heard below in the body, emanates. It is a continuous and unending Music, of which Maulana Rumi says,

Catch hold of the Music that lasts through eternity,
Search for the sun that never sets.

Again, the people of the world are quite ignorant of It. A rare individual practices It, after It is made manifest by some Master-soul.

Enter ye the temple of the body and listen to the divine melodies,
Those sitting around thee, shall not hear them.

MAULANA RUMI

In the noisy swirl of the work-a-day hurried life that we lead, we cannot hear the soft and gentle echoes of the Music floating down from afar. All those who practiced the Sound Current, in whatever time and in whatever clime, have spoken of these melodies, of course to the extent of their approach and mental apparatus. Even now, those persons, whether young or old, who are put on the Way by some competent Satguru with authority from above, do bear testimony to this sempiternal experience.

In the *Upanishads* we have an account of these musical notes. These resemble to a certain extent the gentle murmurs of the vast sea, low rumbling thunders of the distant clouds, the continuous splash of a waterfall, and ultimately merge into the sound of a conch, and develop into the blast of a trumpet, a thundering drum, sharp violin and a flute.[34]

Mahatma Charan Das, in his book *Bhakti Sagar*, has described ten types of melodies — the sweet warblings of birds, the chirping of green hoppers, tinkling of bells, sound of the gong, conch, playing of cymbals, thunder of clouds, the roar of a lion, violin and flute.

In Hath-yoga Pradipka we have an account of ten kinds of Nad, like the buzz of flower flies, tinkling of anklets, sound of conch, bell and cym-

bals, flute, drum-beat and other musical instruments, and the roar of a lion, etc.

In *Sar Bachan*,[35] Swami Shiv Dayal Singh Ji gives a wonderful account of the divine orchestra, comprising ten musical notes resembling what has been said above, as one enters into Sahansdal Kanwal or the region of thousand petaled lights.

Madame Blavatsky, a Russian theosophist initiated into theosophy in 1856 while in Tibet, the founder of the Theosophical Society and the author of a controversial work, *Isis Unveiled*, writes in her book *The Voice of the Silence:*

> The first is like the nightingale's sweet voice chanting a song of parting to its mate. The second comes as the sound of silver cymbals of the *Dhyanis* awakening the twinkling stars. The next is as the plaint melodies of the ocean spirit imprisoned in its shell. And this is followed by the chant of *Vina.* The fifth like sound of bamboo flute shrills in thine ear. It changes next into a trumpet blast. The last vibrates like the dull rumbling of a thunder cloud.

Amir Khusro, a great scholar and mystic poet (disciple of Kh. Nizam-ud-Din Chishti), has described these sounds thus:

> First is the hum of the bees and the second
> is the sound of anklets,

The third is that of the conch and the
fourth that of a gong,
The fifth is a trumpet-blast and the sixth
that of a flute,
The seventh is of a *Bhir,* the eighth of a
mardang (drum beat) and the ninth of a
Shahnai (Naferi).
And the tenth doth resemble the roar of a
lion,
Such indeed is the Heavenly Orchestra,
O Khusro.
In these ten melodies a yogin gets
absorbed,
The senses get stilled and so doth the
mind, saith Khusro.
With the flourish of limitless Music within,
All the lusts of the flesh and the deadly
sins fly off,
The Master too has a wonderful world of
his own,
Khusro is now fully engrossed within him-
self.[36]

All these melodies come swarming within as the pilgrim soul starts on the Path; but of all these, one must catch the sound of a gong or a conch for these in particular are connected with the higher spiritual realms, the various mansions in the house of our Father:

None knows where the abode of the
Beloved is,
But sure enough the sound of the gong
comes floating therefrom.
HAFIZ

Shabd has divine melody in It:

True Word emanates the melodies of *Sehaj,*
and the mind gets absorbed in Truth,
Ineffable and wonderful is the Word of the
Immaculately Pure, and only a Guru's
devotee implants It.[37]
GURU AMAR DAS

Why do we not hear the Sound Principle?

Though Shabd is ever reverberating in each one of us, we do not hear It. The reason for this is not hard to find. So long as the mind stuff is in a state of perpetual storm and stress, is torn by countless conflicting passions and desires, feeds fat on the food of egotism, and is tossed about on the endless waves of worldly life, it cannot possibly catch the slow and sublime rhythmic vibrations of the subtle Sound, nor acquire any love for It.

As long as the mind is in a state of
perpetual flux and unrest, and is filled
with thoughts of I-am-ness,

> *Shabd* fails to impart its sweet fragrance and *Naam* fails to inspire love and attraction.[38]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

Maulana Rumi likewise says:

> Your ears cannot listen to the Music of the Sound;
> Perverted as you are, you have lost the very sense of hearing.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Christ says:

> For this peoples' heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted and I should heal them.[39]

Shabd is the Voice of God and His primal manifestation. It is pervading everywhere in and out of space.

> The Word of the Master shows the Way to God realization.[40]
>
> GURU NANAK

This Sound Principle has often been referred to as "Bani" as well:

Bani has been reverberating through the four ages,
Emanating from Truth, It sings of Truth.[41]

GURU AMAR DAS

The Bani pervades everywhere. It is known as Shabd or Naam, and has sweetness in It.

In every age, *Bani* has been known as Shabd,
Sweet is the Naam and mind longs for it.[42]

GURU AMAR DAS

What a pity! for the Jiva, clogged as it is and hemmed in by mind and matter on all sides, has lost the angel in him and as such cannot listen to the subtle and sublime Sound of the Beloved.

Alas! Ye are imprisoned behind the walls of the finitude (body and bodily adjuncts),
And listen not to the sublime Sound of the Merciful.

MAULANA RUMI

This sound is an eternal call for a return home:

There comes a perpetual call from afar,
Calling thee back to thine own home.

TULSI SAHIB

The Sublime Sound cannot of course be heard by the physical ears. There is a way for our listening to the divine Music which can be heard by the

inner faculty of transcendental hearing, and this can be trained, developed and pressed into service through the grace of some Master-soul; for no amount of worldly knowledge, wisdom and ingenuity can help in this. Though science has not yet been able to probe into this mystery, yet it can be resolved and experienced by actual experimentation in the laboratory of the Self with the instruction and guidance of the Saints. The results of recent scientific investigations have now revealed the presence of rhythmic motion even in atoms, and scientific findings are every day coming closer to reality.

How can we listen to the Sound Principle?

The next natural question is how the Shabd can be contacted and attuned with. The saints tell us that we can listen to the Sound Principle if we can introvert and stop listening to the outer sounds of the world around us. In other words, we must learn to recede into our own Self by a process of inversion and become a Pure Self by releasing the soul from the prison of the facts of life, before we can qualify the Self for Self-realization, which comes by listening to the Sound Current. A holy communion with and practice of the Sound gradually disenfranchises the soul of all that is of the world and reveals the cult of love, life and light that is at the back of all creation. We have, in brief, to stop the energy flowing out

through the sense organs, particularly the eyes, ears, and tongue and concentrate it at the still-point in the body, the center of the soul, leaving the mind high and dry, before we can listen to the Music of the soul in Its fullness.

> Close down the three outlets and attend to the ceaseless Music,
> O Nanak! in the deep silence of the soul, there is a perpetual light with no sunrise and sunset.[43]

Kabir says:

> Close down thine eyes, ears and mouth,
> And hear ye the unending melody of the Shabd.

Shah Niaz tells us:

> Sound is pervading the whole world in Its fullness,
> Ye can surely listen to It with transcendental hearing,
> This ye can do by closing the outer bodily ears,
> For surely then shall ye hear the endless song,
> And It shall take you beyond the sway of destruction and dissolution.

Apart from the physical senses, we have with us subtle senses much more powerful than the physical. At present these subtle senses are lying dormant and unused. They can by regular practice be wakened into consciousness and pressed into use in the astral world, where we can witness and experience supra-mental patterns and colors just as we do on the physical plane; nay, with much more clarity and understanding than we do here.

> Along with the five physical senses, we are endowed with five subtle senses as well,
> These are of solid gold when compared with the others of copper.
>
> MAULANA RUMI

Shabd can thus be heard by the ears of thought. Both the soul and the Shabd are of the same spiritual essence, and as such soul can, without the aid of physical senses, apprehend the subtle Sound.

> Soul is of the essence of God and is His very own Self,
> And It can sing His praises in an unspoken language without any outer aids (tongue, lips or palate).

In the holy Koran also it is stated that soul is the fiat or decree of God. It is His authorization that pervades everywhere, upholding the sky and the earth and all that exists.

Where does Shabd dwell and how can It be contacted?

There are ten portals of the body, of which nine are visible while the tenth is invisible.

> The citadel of the body has nine open doorways, while the tenth is closely shut in secret,
> None can have access through the tenth, the Way in, except through practice of the *Guru's Word.*[44]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

> Enter ye in at the Strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate and narrow is the Way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.[45]

> Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.[46]
>
> CHRIST

As long as the soul is wandering in and out of the nine portals of the body, it is always unwillingly being drained of its secret energy or Johar. With this constant flow of energy outside, it remains a complete stranger to the Reality within its own self and does not know the latent potentialities of Godhood lodged in its very nature.

A whore (mind ridden soul) madly in love
with the nine portals can hardly get to
Reality.[47]

KABIR

Guru Amar Das also advises that we should close down our nine portals, still the mind and then "tap inside" (as Emerson puts it) and push our way into the mansion of the Beloved from where unceasing Music is flowing down day and night, which can be contacted through the practice enjoined by a Master-soul.

Closing down the nine doors, seek ye the
tenth that leads to thy True Home,
There the ceaseless Music plays round the
clock and can be heard through the
Master's Dispensation.[48]

GURU AMAR DAS

Guru Nanak describes this so beautifully:

Sukhmana, Ida and *Pingla* cannot be known
unless the Inconceivable makes one
conceive,
O Nanak! the True Master makes the Word
audible by bringing one above the
three.[49]

This means that one cannot fully commune with the Word of the True Master unless one completely transcends body consciousness. In the realm of mind and matter, as far as the five tattwas reign

supreme, the Sound Current works through them for the benefit of the physical creation; but beyond them is the Word in Its primordial form unalloyed by any of these things.

The Sound Principle stands by Itself and is independent of everything for It is self-existing. The siddhas once asked Guru Nanak,

> Where does the Sound abide that ferries us across the ocean of delusive matter?
> Whereon stand the *Pranas* (vibrations), as they extend out ten fingers from the nostrils?

Guru Nanak thus replied,

> The Sound Principle abides in us; though indescribable, yet I find It immanent everywhere,
> The *Pranas* are rooted in the region of silence, but the Sound Principle is All-pervasive in Its fullness and is self-existent.[50]

Shabd is the very life of our life. It is a part of our being, and we cannot do without It even for a single moment. But we cannot contact It unless we rise above body consciousness.

> Search for the Sound (the soul essence) in the body, and thou shalt be saved,

By devotion to the Master, I enjoy
perpetual peace, for in me is Sound, the
crest jewel of all virtues.[51]
NANAK

Our human body is a receiving set for catching the Sound Current and like a radio, has to be adjusted properly to bring it in tune with the ethereal waves. The Master, at the time of initiation, connects the spirit within with the lowest link of the All-pervading Sound, and this contact can be developed by day to day practice to any length one may like.

Sound and Light

In the world there are two things that serve as guides to a weary traveler on a lonesome journey in a pitch dark night; to wit, Sound and Light (Kalam and Nur). These are the two aids also on the Path of Spirituality. Each of them has Its own purpose. We have the divine Light in us and from within It emanates Sound, and the two together have been described as Flaming Sound or Sounding Flame.

The mind, when attuned with the Sound,
becomes detached and gets engrossed.
In the heart of the Light within is a delectable Sound, that makes one fully
absorbed in God.[52]
GURU NANAK

Incomprehensible is the real thing.[53]

GURU ARJAN

Without the Light of Shabd, darkness
prevails within,
Nor do we get to the Reality, nor end with
the gyres.[54]

GURU AMAR DAS

Without Shabd it is all darkness,
With Shabd manifested, the world came
into being.[55]

GURU RAM DAS

All life and all power come from It. From the sun to the candle flame, all light comes from this grand powerhouse. The energy of the scientist and the pranas of the yogins are but manifestations of this life-stream which, like electricity in the air, is all-pervading and all-powerful.

In Him was life; and the life was the light of man. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not. . . .

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.[56]

ST. JOHN

St. Augustine tells us of the manifestation in him of the Light in this way:

> I entered even into my inward self. Thou being my Guide and able as I was: for Thou were become my helper. And I entered and beheld with the eye of my soul (such as it was), above the same eye of my soul above my mind, the Light Unchangeable. Not this ordinary light which all flesh may look upon, nor as it were a greater of the same kind, as though the brightness of this should be manifold brighter, and with its greatness take up all space. Not such was the light but other, yea, far other from all these. . . . He that knows the Truth, knows what that Light is and he that knows It, knows Eternity.

Sant Kabir tells us that the soul without Shabd is blind and does not know the Path:

> Without the Word one is blind and knows not the Way,
> With no way out, one endlessly wanders in the gyres.

Thousands of years ago, Zoroaster taught the worship of the cult of Vital Fire and even today we see its traces in the symbolic fire that the Parsis keep burning in their homesteads. Gautama, when he became Buddha or the Enlightened One, taught the Path of Life to his followers.

All the Prophets of the East or the West, who practiced the process of inversion and recession or

withdrawal of the Soul Current at will, speak of both the experiences of Light and Sound. As soul proceeds on the spiritual path, the gazing faculty precedes that of the hearing, for light is faster than sound.

Soul, though imprisoned by mind and matter, is yet endowed with the gift of subtle faculties of seeing and hearing independent of the sense organs; and when one develops them both, one can withdraw the life-current from the body and then can move freely on to higher spiritual realms, thereby escaping forever from the bondage of the world.

With the guidance of the gazing faculty,
I shall reach Sat Lok.

SWAMI SHIVDAYAL SINGH

In the beginning, Light appears first and Sound comes afterwards. In practice, we do Simran and Dhyan in the beginning, the reason being that these prepare the ground for further development. Though each has Its own individual purpose, yet both of them are practiced for the advent of Sound or Shabd, from where the real help comes. Shabd then is the control keystone in the arch-way of Simran and Dhyan, the two sides of the arch. Again, in the spiritual journey, there come stages where the soul gets bewildered in the blinding Light that descends around it from all

sides, and there, nothing but the Sound helps to pull it through.

> And thine ears shall hear a Word behind thee,
> Saying this is the Way, walk ye in it.[57]
>
> ISAIAH

Again, there are stages on the Way where utter darkness prevails, and there are regions of deep silence and solemnity where one is struck with awe and dismay, and there too, the glorious Voice of God comes to the rescue as an unerring guide and a never failing friend, saying,

> Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,
> In thy most need to go by thy side.
>
> EVERYMAN

The importance of sound as a guiding factor is recognized on all hands. A traveler on a desolate plain in a dark night with no habitation in sight, anxiously and wistfully tries to catch some sound, maybe the bark of some distant dog, wherewith to guide his weary footsteps in the right direction; for the bark announces to him the proximity of some wayside hutments and encourages him on till he reaches them. So do benighted stragglers try to catch the click-clack of a horse's hoof or the tinkling of a bell round an animal's neck. This is the power of sound; unfailing and deadly sure

as it is, it acquires even more significance in the inner journey of the soul.

Shabd and Truth are Synonymous

Shabd is nothing but Absolute and Abstract Truth in Its concrete form. It is an eternal and unchanging principle of God's Power, working out His divine Will in all directions. Like Truth Itself, It was in the beginning where there was nothing else. It was the beginning of each cycle of creation and It shall exist forever and forever.

Guru Nanak tells of It as follows:

> The Word is the only symbol of Truth,
> And can be known and experienced
> through a perfect Master.[58]

Guru Amar Das and Guru Arjan say of It:

> *Bani* or *Shabd* is Truth personified,
> O love this Truth with all your heart and
> soul.[59]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

> Listen, O friend, to the all-pervading Voice
> of God,
> The Master has given you all True Word of
> God.[60]
>
> GURU ARJAN

Shabd is the Water of Life

Again, Shabd is the Water of Life, that gives us immortality and blesses us with life everlasting.

> I tell you most solemnly, whoever keeps my Word will never see death.[61]
> If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.
> He that believeth in me . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of Living Water.[62]
>
> CHRIST

Once Jesus, when passing through Samaria, came to Jacob's Well and sat there awhile when a Samaritan woman came to draw water and Jesus asked for a drink. But, Samaritan as she was, she hesitated to deal with a Jew, and thereupon Jesus said to her, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that sayeth to thee, give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee Living Water. . . ."

> Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.[63]
>
> CHRIST

In the Book of Jeremiah we have:

> For my people. . . . have forsaken me, the fountain of Living Waters.[64]

In the Sikh scriptures we have:

> The Word of the Master is an elixir that does away with all desires,
> The mind gets dyed in Truth and is forever absorbed in Him.[65]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

Without Shabd, the whole world is in stark ignorance and life goes in vain. It is only a devotee of the Master who gets access to the Water of Life.

> The world is in ignorance of Shabd and life is valueless indeed,
> O Nanak! Shabd alone is the true elixir, and a devotee of the Master gets It.[66]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

The well of the Water of Life lies within us, but attached as we are to the mind, we do not know of It nor partake of It. Like a deer with musk hidden in its navel, we search for It outside all our life and die in the attempt.

> Within the body the Water of Life is surging in fullness, but the mind-ridden do not taste It;
> With musk in its navel, the deer kills himself in endless search for it without.[67]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

The stream of life is gushing within, and by means of Shabd one can approach It and partake of It.

The fount of the Water of Life is bubbling to the brim,
One who is really athirst can get to It by following the Sound.[68]

GURU AMAR DAS

Shabd is the essence of all worship

All our endeavors, practices and rituals are to achieve Shabd. The devotion to Shabd is acceptable to God, and He grants us Salvation thereby.

The devotion is that of the Shabd.[69]

GURU AMAR DAS

The practice of the Master's Word is the essence of all worship.[70]

GURU NANAK

Nothing but the practice of the Shabd leads to the Reality. One cannot, by any means, get out of the world of attachments. In this context Guru Nanak says:

In this world, true devotion is that of Shabd, Without Shabd, one remains an egoistic fool.[71]

GURU NANAK

In the present age — Kali Yuga — the worship that is acceptable to God is that of Shabd.

In *Kali Yuga*, communion with the Word is the true *Kirtan*.

It is the true devotion by which ye shall escape all I-ness.[72]

GURU AMAR DAS

It is with Shabd that a Jiva is transformed from clay into gold and from filth into a pure crystal.

By listening to the Word of the Master, one turns from brittle glass into solid gold,
By tasting the Word of the Master one is transformed from poison into Nectar.[73]

GURU RAM DAS

In this way one reaps the full benefit of his human birth.

By contact with the True Word, a devotee earns his merit.
The light of the soul dawns within, and he lives in perpetual ecstasy.[74]

GURU AMAR DAS

Shabd is identical with Hukam and Naam. In fact, all these words mean the Expression or Power of God.

He who accepts His Will, is acceptable to Him,
With the help of the Master's Shabd, know ye the Naam.[75]

GURU AMAR DAS

Shabd is Soma Ras, very sweet and delicious:

> Sweet is the Word of the Master,
> Such an elixir one finds within.[76]
>
> GURU NANAK

Shabd is an inexhaustible treasure and ever remains full.

> So long as His mercy lasts, the stream of life can never run dry,
> O Nanak! Shabd is inexhaustible, distribute It as thou wilt.[77]
>
> GURU ARJAN

Shabd is Limitless and All-pervading. The angel of death cannot come near It.

> Thou art the Omniscient friend and Thou alone can contact us,
> All praise to the Word of the Guru, It is boundless indeed,
> Even the Angel of Death cannot reach where the limitless Word prevails.[78]
>
> GURU NANAK

Shabd is All-pervading and Immanent:

> The Sun of Shabd illumined all the Four Ages,
> A devotee alone meditates on the *Bani*.[79]
>
> GURU NANAK

Shabd spreads in Its fullness everywhere:

Consider not that *Hari* is far off,
He is the nearest of the near,
He is ever in attention with eyes and ears,
And spreads everywhere in fullness.[80]

GURU AMAR DAS

Shabd or Hukam is the Controlling Power of God:

Thy Command *(Hukam)* holds Its sway on all sides,
Thy Word (Naam) reverberates everywhere,
Shabd is immanent in all,
The true God meets us if Thou so ordaineth.[81]

GURU NANAK

Shabd abides in the holy temple of the body, and as such may be found therein:

Search for Shabd in the temple of the body,
And get to the precious Naam therein. [82]

GURU AMAR DAS

Shabd can be contacted in the body by a process of inversion and self-analysis:

Discipline the body to cross over the ocean of life,
And meditate on the Essence of the Soul,
The devotion to the Master grants perpetual ecstasy,

The Shabd of all virtues dwells within, in abundance. [83]

GURU NANAK

Guru Nanak tells us of the abode of Shabd:

Cross over the *Sukhmana,* leaving *Ida* and *Pingla* aside, to comprehend the Incomprehensible,
Far above these three the True Master manifests the Shabd.[84]

GURU NANAK

How to contact Shabd

(1) By the Grace of God, God may, in His mercy, manifest Shabd in whomever He likes.
By His glance of Grace, Shabd becomes manifest within, dispelling all skepticism,
The body and the mind both get purified and the pure Sound of *Bani* (the Naam) is implanted in the heart.[85]

GURU NANAK

None can understand Thee unless Thou doeth it for one,
None can meet Thee unless Thou so decreeth,
Then one sings of the *Bani* through Shabd all the time,
And remains absorbed in the True One.[86]

GURU AMAR DAS

Those who come within the ambit of His favor, for them Shabd is minted in His true mint, and they alone engage in the practice of Naam.

Only in such a mint, can man be cast into the Word,
But they alone who are favored by Him, can take unto this Path.
O Nanak, on whom He looks with grace, He fills with everlasting peace.[87]

GURU NANAK

(2) By the grace of Sant Satguru and Sat Sangat, God may, in His inimitable mercy, lead one to His accredited representative on earth who links the soul with Shabd by making Shabd manifest within.

In the fullness of time, He leads one to a *Satguru*,
Then one takes to the Path of Surat Shabd Yoga.[88]

The Perfect Master makes the Shabd manifest,
Rising above the three *Gunas* one rests in *Turiya*.[89]

Satguru, the greatest Donor, manifests the Shabd,
And then all restlessness ceases and one gets eternal rest.[90]

GURU AMAR DAS

Guru is Word personified, Word made flesh, and he alone can make it manifest. It is, in fact, the gift of the Guru, and no one else can help in the matter.

> Why hold back what one holds in trust?
> There can be no peace until the trust is discharged,
> The Word of the Master can be implanted only by the Master,
> No one else can make the Word manifest.[91]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

Shabd is an unspoken language emanating of Itself from God, and like Him, the Master imparts the Power of God in an unspoken language. In this context, Maulana Rumi says:

> The Master, like God, acts without any outer aids,
> And imparts knowledge to disciples in an unspoken language.

The Master, at the time of initiation, explains the wondrous and formless Word, and then, with the lever of His own life-impulse, raises the spirit up and contacts the initiate with the Naam.

(3) By complete self-surrender at the feet of the Master in all humility after casting away the pride of birth and caste, riches and possessions, knowledge and wisdom.

At once rid thyself of the pride of
knowledge and penances,
Take a single draught of the intoxicating
wine.

HAFIZ

So long as the soil is not ready and the seeds are not sown in season, they do not bear any fruit. Similarly, until the thorns and thistles of life are weeded out of the mind, it cannot be stilled. However, it grows gradually domesticated by the practice of the Shabd, and in course of time gets rarefied or etherealized and comes to acquire single-mindedness with the result that the Light of Heaven comes to be reflected therein.

So long the mind is swayed by passions,
It is full of all kinds of pride and prejudices,
It can neither relish Shabd nor love Naam.[92]

GURU AMAR DAS

So, inner cleanliness is far more important than outer cleanliness, for without it one can hardly make any progress on the Path.

Devotion to Shabd: What it is

To attend and listen with a single mind to the Dhun Atmak Shabd within is devotion of the right type. Shabd is highly subtle, and until we rise to the same level of subtlety we cannot possibly grasp or take hold of it. Shabd or the Power of

God is all-pervading in all-consciousness, and if our spirit, which is of the same essence as God, gets contact with Shabd, it is a contact with God; for God is not different from His Power (Shabd).

> A contact with Shabd is contact with God,
> It is the crowning fruition of all endeavors.[93]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

In order to establish a contact with Shabd, it is necessary that the soul must first free itself from the prison house of finite existence. It is only a perfect Master who can enable it to break through the bondage of mind and matter, raise it above body-consciousness, and then link it with the Over-soul — the life of all life — the Naam.

Shabd is the heritage of a rare devotee of the Master

Everyone wishes to see God face-to-face but only a rare soul gets the holy communion through the Shabd.

> How many are pining to meet Thee?
> A rare soul realizes Thee with the Word of the Master.[94]
>
> GURU NANAK

This body is the holy temple of God, with God's Power working in and out of it. All persons — rich and poor, lettered and unlettered, young and

aged, man and woman, anywhere and everywhere, irrespective of color, caste and creed — are qualified to have a free access to that Power within through the grace of some competent Master, and thus practice Shabd quite easily and naturally and reap the fruit thereof.

Holy temple of the body is His Emporium
with the Shabd beautifully set within,
A devotee of the Master may find the
precious Naam therein.[95]

Without contact with the Shabd, the world
remains in delusion and the human life
goes in vain.
O Nanak, Shabd is the Water of Life and a
rare devotee of the Master gets to It.[96]

GURU AMAR DAS

A mind-ridden person, because of the oscillation of the mind, does not recognize the Shabd and remains a total stranger to this elixir.

The restless mind knows not the Way,
The filthy mind cannot recognize the Word.[97]

GURU NANAK

A slave of the senses knows not the Word
and loses his self-respect,
And he finds no delight in the Shabd as
he remains engaged in the sensual
pursuits.[98]

GURU AMAR DAS

Shabd: What It does

Shabd is All-consciousness. It is just a wave in the sea of consciousness. Man is a drop of the Ocean of God, and both are of the same spirit. While one is the Ocean, the other is the wave, and the third is a drop of All-conscious God. The wave of conscious Shabd cannot but, like a powerful magnet, attract and draw to Itself the conscious drop of the spirit. The spirit finds no rest until, riding upon the Sound Current, it reaches the heavenly home of the Father and attains salvation. The sound is surging in Its fullness and the spirit needs but to contact It to rise above all limitations into the limitless eternity.

Surat and Shabd are naturally related to each other. Shabd is characterized by Light and Sound principles wherewith the mind gets stilled, and the spirit, freed from the clutches of the mind, is irresistibly drawn by the Shabd, and is taken to her native home from where the Sound Current is emanating. On the other hand, those who take up practices involving Pranas cannot go beyond the frontiers of Prana which extend to the mental or astral heaven (Chidakash). But a Shabd-yogin can go freely, openly and honorably to wherever he likes, because Shabd pervades everywhere without any limitations, and reach the true home of his Father.

My God is everywhere and at all times,
And becomes manifest by practice of
Shabd.[99]

GURU AMAR DAS

Shabd is the means of finding God. A contact with the Shabd means contact with God.

A communion with the Word is union with
God,
And all endeavors then get crowned with
success.[100]

GURU AMAR DAS

Shabd is the only way that leads to the True King.

In the living soul is the Life of life (Shabd),
Which becomes an usher to the great
King.[101]

GURU RAM DAS

Shabd is the Way that leads to Reality. It is a barque that can take the Jiva safely across the sea of matter to the mansion of the Lord.

The Absolute God and the spirit along with Shabd, the connecting link between the two, constitute the holy trinity, for the same Power of God is working simultaneously in all the three. The spirit in man has no separate existence independent of God.

O Kabir! the spirit is of the essence of God.[102]

KABIR

Though all spirits are of One Reality, yet each one of the spirits feels that it has a separate existence.

Sach Khand or the Kingdom of God is within us, but none can enter therein without proper guidance. For admittance thereto, we must invert and become a little child in innocence and purity, for then we can catch the saving lifeline of Shabd which leads Godward. By communion with Shabd, we are freed from pleasure and pain, mind and matter, and rise above the pairs of opposites, and attain liberation from the cycle of births and deaths.

Shabd is the live and conscious Life-current of God which has both created the world and sustains it. It is the involuted seed that has evolved into a mighty tree laden with many colored flowers and fruits. Whatever now exists, exists in Eternity and whatever goes out of existence also goes into Eternity. Everything is in the great Deep, rising momentarily to the surface in the form of tides, waves, ripples, bubbles and the like, appearing and disappearing before our eyes — the Unmanifested, manifesting Himself into so many forms and patterns.

Shabd is the root-cause of the creation and the creation is the resultant effect thereof. All that sprouts from and comes out of the roots is already in the roots in a condensed form, and in fullness of time grows and fructifies. When a ray of the

sun falls on a polished reflector, it begins to reflect the sun itself. In the same way, when the mind is purified and there is left not a trace of I-ness in it, it begins to reflect God's Light from within. Just as the ray of the sun is not different from the sun itself, so also a spirit, which is nothing but a ray of God, is not different from God and begins to manifest the hidden Power of God, with proper training and guidance in the Science of Shabd or Word.

Shabd (Dhun-Atmak) is the true primordial Word as taught by St. John in his Gospel. It is responsible for creating the various grand divisions, divisions and sub-divisions of the universe right from the highest spiritual region down to the physical world in which we live. Emanating from God, the spirit current worked out the miracle of creation and is sustaining it and controlling it in all details. The practice of the Sound Current, as taught by the Masters in all ages and in all countries, is the highest religion and confers the highest boon — to wit, liberation from the bondage of mind and matter while still living. But contact with Shabd can be established only through the grace of a Master of the Sound Current and not otherwise.

Shamas Tabrez, a Muslim divine, speaks of Shabd as follows:

There comes a Sound *(Nida)*, from
neither within nor without,
From neither right nor left, from neither
behind nor in front,
From neither below nor above, from
neither East nor West,
Nor is It of the elements: water, air, fire,
earth and the like;
From where then? It is from that place thou
art in search of;
Turn ye toward the place wherefrom the
Lord makes His appearance.
From where a restless fish out of water gets
water to live in,
From the place where the prophet Moses
saw the divine Light,
From the place where the fruits get their
ripening influence,
From the place where the stones get
transmuted to gems,
From the place to which even an infidel
turns in distress,
From the place to which all men turn when
they find this world a vale of tears.
It is not given to us to describe such a
blessed place;
It is a place where even the heretics would
leave off their heresies.

Truly, the Shabd is coming from the direction in which the soul has to go. Without Shabd, the soul remains in darkness and feels helpless.

> Without the aid of Shabd, the soul wanders
> blindfold in ignorance and knows not
> the Way out.
>
> KABIR

All sages and seers have counted upon Shabd as the only means of salvation. But one cannot take hold of the lifeline of the Sound Current without initiation into the esoteric teachings of the Masters from a competent living Master-soul and practicing the process of soul-withdrawal at the still point in the body between and behind the two eyebrows. This is moving from the circumference of life to the center of life and from here the soul, following the lead of the Sound Principle, proceeds to her native home, the Mansion of God, the source and fountainhead of the divine Melody Itself.

Shabd thus leads us to an altogether new life — life of the spirit — as distinguished from the life of the flesh. Christ too taught of this new life which our Christian brethren have forgotten with the lapse of time. St. John, in his Gospel, tells us,

> Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a
> man be born again, he cannot see the
> kingdom of God.

> Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit.
> Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again.
> The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the spirit.[103]
>
> CHRIST

In the Book of Ezekiel we have:

> A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.[104]

This new life of the spirit begins from the day of initiation into the mysteries of the spirit, call it what you like: "Deeksha" as the Hindus do, "Baet" as the Muslims say, "Baptism" as it is known among the Christians, or "Pahul" as among the Sikhs. The Vedic seers gave it the name of "Duey Janama" which literally means second birth. The life of the spirit begins, not with the theoretical exposition of the spiritual science, but by a practical demonstration on the spiritual plane of the

spirit-current made manifest. Here the invisible and inaudible life-stream is made both visible and audible to the spirit within, converting the atheist into a theist in the true sense of the term. It is imparting the life-impulse and making It throb in every pore of the body. This coming back of the soul to the realization of her true nature and rising into Universal or Cosmic awareness beyond the walls of finitude is true resurrection, or coming to a new birth and a new life. To die in the body while living, is to live in the spirit.

St. Paul describes it thus:

> I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.[105]

The life of the flesh and the life of the spirit are two distinct and separate things, exclusive of each other. This is why it is said,

> He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.[106]
>
> CHRIST

Guru Nanak speaks of it:

> The birth in the Master releases one from the cycle of transmigrations.[107]

Among the Muslims it is called "Fana-fil-Sheikh" or Death in the Master which is just the same thing

as Birth in the Master, for this death is but the beginning of a new life.

Shabd thus takes us out of the ignorance which characterizes both mind and matter, purifies us through and through, and gives us a new lease on life — the life of the spirit, which is unchanging and eternal — as one breaks away once and for all from the body and bodily attachments, and sees the new world without the help of the outer eyes.

Communion with the All-pervading Word
of the Master is the highest virtue,
And takes one to his native land to drink
the elixir of life and to see the new
world without the help of the outer
eyes.[108]

GURU RAM DAS

The early morning hours are best suited for practice of the Sound Principle, for the mind is yet fresh out of sleep and has not yet wandered into the daily routine of the physical life.

In the early morning hours, commune with
the Word, leaving aside all attachments.
Nanak would like to be the slave of His
slave who engaged in the Word and
won what is lost to the world.[109]

At the ambrosial hour of the early dawn,
Be ye in communion with the divine Word,
And meditate on His glory.[110]

GURU NANAK

Shabd: Its blessings

Shabd brings in untold blessings. It is the pow-erhouse of all energy or force in any form, from Pranas down to electricity and magnetism. Every form of life is the manifestation of Shabd. All that is, is of Shabd and nothing is that is not of Shabd — life-current pulsating in and out of space. Those who commune with Shabd, and live in and by Shabd, are verily the children of the Supreme One, the life of life and the light of light.

Shabd is the very Bread of Life which comes down from Heaven for all those who hunger after righteousness, and the very Water of Life for those who thirst after Self-knowledge and God-knowledge. True love, wisdom and power are the greatest gifts that one gets by basking in the sunshine of Heaven's Light.

1. Mind grows docile and is purified of the lusts of the flesh. There is no remedy to control the oscillations of the ever-restless mind. One may resort to all the known methods — to wit, penances and austerities, rites and rituals, fasts and vigils, pilgrimages and circumambulations, purificatory baths in the holy rivers, charitable and philanthropic acts — but cannot thereby achieve inner peace. On the contrary, all these help in developing the egotistic instinct which is the root cause of all evil. Sage Vashisht, while teaching Rama, told him that he could for a moment be-

lieve that one had lifted the mighty Himalayas, or had drunk the oceanic waters to the lees, but the sage would never believe it if anyone were to say that he had subdued the mind. But by listening to the Sound Current one is rid of all Karmic impressions of the past. The contact with the Shabd acts as a spark of fire that burns down all impurities of the mind as a heap of hay is burnt down to ashes in an instant. The storehouse of unfructified Karmas is blown off like a powder-magazine, and once released of this gigantic load, the mind and soul get attuned with the Heavenly Music, lost to the world around like a moth before a candle.

Mind runs after pleasurable sensations, most of which fall into two groups: forms and patterns on the one hand and sweet symphonies of sound on the other. The Shabd too has both these characteristics — the heavenly Melody and the divine Light — and once that Sound or Light principle becomes manifest, mind is paralyzed, losing all faith in the transitory charms of the world that gradually lose their glamour and grow dull, insipid and lifeless.

With a draught of the Water of Life the mind grows still, for there is no other remedy to still it but that of communing with the Sound Current.

> Without the Word of the Master, the mind remains restless. [111]

Our restless mind becomes steady when
engrossed in the Shabd,
And this is the highest worship and
the greatest virtue.[112]

GURU NANAK

By practice of the Shabd, ripples cease to float on the lake of the mind.

All the oscillations of the mind cease with
the practice of the Shabd, and it gets
pacified of itself.[113]

GURU AMAR DAS

Mind keeps running in space — high and
low — so long as it does not come in
contact with the Shabd.[114]

GURU NANAK

Shabd is sharper than a two-edged razor and cuts asunder all attachments of the world, conquers the five passions and frees one of bondage from all that one holds dear; and the spirit when freed, flies unfettered toward her native Home in Heaven.

Being rid of the five deadly sins, one remains
engrossed in the Lord.[115]

KABIR

2. Shabd is the remedy for egotism from which all the world suffers.

Egotism is the greatest ill oppressing all,
Without Shabd, one cannot get rid of this malady.[116]

GURU AMAR DAS

Egotism is an age-old disease, but it can be remedied by practice of the Master's Word.

Egotism is an age-old disease and its remedy too lies within,
Should the Lord so favor, one takes to the practice of the Master's Word.[117]

GURU NANAK

The poison of egotism is rendered ineffective by the Shabd of the Master.[118]

GURU AMAR DAS

O Nanak! Shabd burns away egotism.[119]

GURU NANAK

Shamas Tabrez also prescribes medicine of Shabd to cure one of his egotism:

When thou shalt hear the trumpet-blast,
Thou shalt be rid of all pride and passions,
When the harmonious sound shall fall on thy ears,
Thou shalt be freed from the life of the senses.

3. Shabd brings in inner peace and satiety. Everyone is in a desperate search for peaceful rest

and repose, but does not get it. All the comforts of the flesh are but pleasures of an evanescent nature, floating like the clouds in the sky. The sensations which seem pleasurable for awhile are the result of our own fixity of attention and apart from that have no real and independent existence. Our case is like that of a dog who while munching a dry bone hurts his mouth, and his own blood trickles down his palate to his tongue giving him relish and he is deluded into the belief that all this is from the dry bone.

Spirit or soul is a conscious entity. It cannot possibly derive or get any happiness from inert, material and lifeless things — that is, things in which the life-principle is in a dormant or a latent state. It is only from the fount of higher consciousness that the spirit can get her food and sustenance.

The Sound Current which the Master makes audible is an active life-principle (stream of life), and contact and communion with It gives the soul real happiness and bliss.

The practice of the Master's Word grants
immunity from all ailments,
And the devotee of the Master is freed
from all sufferings.[120]
GURU AMAR DAS

Shabd has an exhilarating and exulting influence which charms the body and mind, both of which acquire ineffable serenity:

The fires of lusts play havoc within but
the Master lets in a stream of refreshing
Music,
Hearing which, the body and the mind
feel blessed and are saved from all
maladies.[121]

GURU RAM DAS

The Master's Word is an ocean of serenity,
It is the Path of salvation and destroys all
egotism.[122]

GURU NANAK

When a soul contacts Shabd, it gets saturated in the Power of God and feels truly blessed.

The contact of Shabd with soul produces
joy supreme,
A dip in the Power of God gives true
happiness.[123]

GURU NANAK

Day and night, an unceasing bliss
descends,
When one remains devoted to the great
Word.[124]

GURU RAM DAS

The Word of the Master is a source of great
happiness,

Blessed indeed is the bride (soul) that lives
saturated with love of the Beloved.[125]

GURU AR.JAN

4. In the Sikh scriptures, one reads of innumerable benefits that accrue from Shabd. Shabd kills, root and branch, all longings and desires, mental vibrations and subtle attachments.

Shabd extinguishes the fires of desires,
And quietly drives away all delusions.[126]

Shabd singes all aspirations and cravings,
And one remains attuned with the Lord.[127]

GURU NANAK

Shabd burns down all material longings
and attachments,
The body and the mind live in eternal
peace in love of the Master.[128]

GURU AMAR DAS

When once the life-stream becomes audible, one never feels lonely; for he hears its reverberations wherever he may be, at home or abroad. The Voice of God keeps reminding him of the true home of his Father. The practice of the Sound Principle rids one of all troubles and afflictions, the five deadly passions, the lusts of the flesh and of the mind, leaving the soul in pristine transparency, detached from all that is of the world and worldly.

Shabd is the supporting staff both in the journey of this life and of the life hereafter. With the experience of transcendence beyond the confines of the body, one becomes fearless of death; and when the allotted span of worldly existence comes to an end, he throws off, once and for all, the mortal coils of the flesh, as easily and happily as one does his old and worn out garments, and is freed from the cycle of births and deaths, and goes openly and honorably to his home in heaven.

The practice of and communion with the Word brings in heaven's light, and one feels divinely blessed. It gives intuitive knowledge of the Self and God and one experiences within himself the integral realization of the soul as one common life-principle extending everywhere, in and around him, without any barriers and limitations of time and space, for all life is one, from eternity to eternity, irrespective of the many forms and patterns through which it may manifest. The moment one rises into the Timeless, he himself becomes timeless. This in fact is true meditation and true devotion leading to the true love of God and His creation, his own self expanding and coinciding with that of his Creator. This is Jivanmukti or salvation while living in the world, like a lotus flower, above and aloft in the muddy pool in which it stands, unaffected by the dirt or squalor of the water below.

Woe betide those who do not get contact with Shabd, for they ever remain between the millstones of God's negative Power and endlessly go up and down in the giant Wheel of creation, according to the merit and demerit of their Karmas, whatever they be. Born in the gyres, they come and go in the gyres, with no way to escape until they contact some Master of the Word who may lead them to the Path of the Word, the Way out, and bring about their salvation.

The waters of life (Hauz-i-Kausar or Prag Raj) lie hidden in the deepest depths of the soul, and the way thereto lies in utter silence through the Word. Living in the hustle and bustle of life, if we try for It at all, we seek It, like other things outside us, and miserably fail in the endeavor. But those who search for It the right way and are put on the Path by some competent Word incarnate may drink of this elixir and taste of this manna and gain immortality.

> I am the *bread of life:* he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. . . .
> I am the *living bread* which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever . . .[129]
> Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be

in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.[130]

CHRIST

Word is the panacea for all ills.[131]

GURU ARJAN

Shabd: Anhad (Limitless) or Anahat (Self-Existing)

Shabd is of two kinds: Ahat and Anahat. Ahat is that sound which is produced when two or more things contact each other. All the outer sounds, all the world over, fall in this category. Anahat is that Sound which does not depend on "Ahat" or contact of two or more things; It does not depend on anything whatever. The Muslim divines call it Anhad, meaning unceasing, eternal or limitless as the term literally means. Shah Niaz speaks of It thus:

Hear thou one continuous and unending
Music,
A music that is eternal and beyond the
confines of death.

Again,

When It has no beginning and no end,
It is therefore called *Anhad* or endless.

The Absolute Truth is both imageless and soundless, for all images and sounds lie dormant in that state of complete fullness within the eternal seed.

He is the Ruling Power over all that exists,
The unstruck Music too is His manifestation.[132]

GURU ARJAN

With no form and no lineaments, His Music doth flow ceaselessly,
Shabd or the Sound Current is the creative life principle of the Immaculate One.[133]

GURU NANAK

In the Shabd there is light giving rise to music:

Sit steadily in the cave of the mind and then shalt thou witness the sounding fire within.[134]

GURU ARJAN

There the unending melodies float,
And the mind drinks the nectar thereof.[135]

GURU NANAK

This Anahat Dhun (self-existing Music) is going on all the time and is eternally endless:

The self-existing Music is eternal and continuous,
Be ye saturated in the ineffable sweetness of the Sound Current.[136]

Night and day the ceaseless strains float down.[137]

GURU NANAK

The melodious strains of the unceasing music are ineffably sweet and charming:

Countless are the notes in the unending
Melody,
The charming sweetness whereof is
ineffable indeed.[138]
GURU AR.JAN

Innumerable are the melodies that are going on before the Court of God:

The sorrows and afflictions of the ages are
blown away,
The endless Music plays continuously at
His Court.[139]
GURU ARJAN

What is there to indicate the abode of God?
There plays the heavenly Music all the
time.[140]
GURU NANAK

The All-pervading Music is going on
everywhere,
In the heart of all, the Divine Music
flows.[141]
GURU ARJAN

Its reverberations are heard in the *Gagan,*
And charmingly sweet is the eternal
Music.[142]
GURU NANAK

One can contact the Heavenly Music only when he transcends body-consciousness:

When the soul currents withdraw from the sensory plane in the nine outlets and get concentrated at the still point in the body in the tenth door at the back of the eyes,
It is only then that one, with the guidance of the Master, is able to contact the heavenly Music that plays interminably.[143]

GURU AMAR DAS

Close thy outgoing faculties,
And hear the eternal Melody.[144]

KABIR

Bhai Gurdas Ji says thus:

When the soul is absorbed in the Word,
It gets lost in the sublime Music.
When the soul is engrossed in the Word,
The unending Music floats down.[145]

The communion with the Anhad Shabd is the only source of perfect knowledge, true devotion and the endless Song that glorifies God and man.

For perfect knowledge and devotion and the story of the great God,
Listen ye ever to the *Anhad* which is the food of the devotees and destroys all their fear.[146]

GURU ARJAN

Anhad Shabd can be contacted beyond the plane of the senses; none can reach It by his own unaided efforts, without the grace and guidance of the true Master. Its manifestation comes as a pure gift from the Master (Gur Parsad).

Anhad Shabd is very exhilarating,
But one gets to It by the Master's grace.[147]

GURU NANAK

O Nanak! one who has access to a perfect Master,
He alone is enabled to contact the eternal Music.[148]

GURU ARJAN

The Anhad Shabd is the only way that leads to God and one begins to relish and enjoy God-intoxication only after the eternal Song is manifested within.

The eternal Song becoming manifest within, one is united with the Beloved,
The lowly Nanak is now in perfect bliss, for he has found the merciful Lord.[149]

GURU ARJAN

It is only a devotee of the Master in whom the divine eternal Melody may become manifest.

The worldly wise cannot reach It.
The Creator has ordained it as a fundamental law,

The eternal Song can be heard through
communion with the Word,
It is made manifest in the devotee of the
Master and in no one else,
In the mighty swirl of the mind one forgets
It and the Godman reminds of It,
This Law has been in operation throughout
the ages.[150]

GURU AMAR DAS

With the practice of the eternal Sound Current, one is purified of all sins and lusts and is washed clean of the karmic impressions of all previous births, and with the light of Self-knowledge and God-knowledge he rises into Brahm and Par Brahm and reaches far beyond into the Kingdom of God, his eternal heritage. The "Lost Word" comes back to light and life only through the grace of a competent Master, as a free gift to whomever He may choose to grant it.

Panch Shabd or The Five Melodies

The unending strains of Music are of a variety of types, and become manifest through a competent Master:

Various are the unending dulcet Melodies,
One cannot describe their delicious strains.[151]

GURU NANAK

Bhai Gurdas Ji tells us in this context:

> By listening to the countless strains of
> the limitless Song, one is struck with
> ineffable wonder. [152]

Out of these, only five melodies are considered of immense value, and the scriptures speak highly of them:

> The five-sounded Melody keeps
> reverberating and my soul is ever
> attracted by It as a *Sarang* is ever after
> water.
> O the Formless One beyond all knowledge!
> I worship thee with all my heart.[153]
>
> KABIR

> The five sublime melodies become manifest
> through the grace of the Master,
> And a rare soul gets attached to them.[154]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

> The five sublime strains become
> distinguishable,
> The drum, the conch, and the thunder.[155]
>
> BENI JI

As these five melodies proceed from God's throne, God is described in the scriptures as "Panch Shabdi" (i.e., Lord of the five-sounded Melody).

The glorious consummation takes place,
When the Lord of the five Melodies comes.[156]

GURU NANAK

The five Melodies constituting the Word come from Him and become the means of reuniting us with Him. The saints also adore the Word; in the Jap Ji we have:

The saint lives by and meditates on the
One Word.[157]

GURU NANAK

Bhai Gurdas Ji tells us that it is only after one transcends body-consciousness that one gets contact with the five-sounded Song.

When the spirit crosses over the world of
matter,
The five-sounded Melody comes to greet
her.[158]

It is only a rare devotee of the Master that practices the five Melodies and thereby reaches the Kingdom of God.

The soul of a true devotee can listen to the
five-sounded Music,
The Song of the Master is characterized by
five distinct strains.[159]

God Himself dwells in the five Sounds,
And the five Sounds give a clue of Him.[160]

BHAI GURDAS

All saints and sages have taught the five Sounds. Hafiz, a great mystic poet, speaks of the five Naubats:

> Be attentive and listen to the five drumbeats, coming down from the high heaven;
> The heaven that lies beyond the six ganglionic centers and is far above the seven skies.

The teachings of Shamas Tabrez, as well, centered round the five-sounded Melody:

> Every day the five drums play at His door to announce His greatness,
> If their Music were to fall on thine ears, thou wouldst be rid of all thine I-ness.

Again, the saint tells us that one can hear the five melodious tunes only when one puts up his tabernacle in the seventh region (i.e., rises above the six chakras of the Pind and comes up to the first astral plane, behind and between the two eyebrows).

> Thou shalt meet the five *Naubats* in the seventh region;
> As soon as you take your bivouac far above the six planes.
>
> SHAMAS TABREZ

The audible Sound Current is in fact only one continuous creative life-principle which, emanating from the Immaculately Pure One, steps down

from plane to plane for the purpose of creating five regions below: pure conscious, great causal, causal, subtle and physical; and as It passes through varying degrees of density, peculiar at each place, It acquires a distinctive sound, and hence has come to be known as Music of the five melodies or Sounds.

There are two distinct sounds up to Trikuti, and two more are added up to Sach Khand, and the fifth sound is that of Sat Lok. In Sat Lok, all the five melodies are completed in their fullness and richness. The mystery of the Sound Principle is revealed by some Sound-incarnate Master and it is by practice of and communion with the five melodies that the soul is gradually led to the Lord of the five-tuned Music.

> It is by the Grace of the Master that one devotes himself wholeheartedly to this practice,
> And meets the All-Merciful, by listening to the five Shabds.[161]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

All the five Sounds are characterized by a delectable harmony; and whoever concentrating his spirit current, recedes back and rises above body-consciousness is sure to meet them.

> In the temple of the body whoever sings, and sings of the Lord,

He, while singing, hears the five Melodies
in the body and gets the highest glory.[162]

GURU RAM DAS

In the scriptures it is said that the reverberation of these tunes becomes manifest in the forehead:

For ages past I have been Thy devotee;
how can I now be separated?
The harmony playing at Thy door,
becomes manifest in my forehead.[163]

KABIR

Where then is this harmony to be located? In which part of the forehead? This harmony can be traced between and behind the two eyes in the Sukhmana and one can hear It only there.

Listen ye to the divine Music in the
Sukhman,
Attend ye to It with all attention.[164]

The Muslim divines and darveshes have spoken of it as Shah-rag and the Mehrab, meaning thereby the life-chord in the great archway of heaven (i.e, forehead).

When in meditation I see Thy beloved
form, O Master!
A great Harmony (Sound) springs up in
the central archstone of my forehead.

HAFIZ

Bulleh Shah says,

> God is much nearer than even the life-chord.

In the Koran it is said,

> I am nearer to thee than thy life-line.

Those who practice the Surat Shabd Yoga under the guidance of a competent Master, begin to unravel the mystery of Self and of God, and begin to see the All-pervading Truth both within and without. Secondly, from the varying sounds he learns at what region he is in his spiritual journey, for they serve as milestones on the Path and thus save him from wandering astray.

> And thine ears shall hear a Word behind thee saying, this is the Way, walk ye in It, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.[165]
>
> ISAIAH

One can find his way to the five Melodies from a competent Master, by practicing his Word.

> The five Sounds become audible by following the instruction of the Master,
> A person with a great good fortune can hear the Limitless Sound Principle. [166]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

A detailed description of the five Sounds relevant to the five regions is given by the Sant Satguru at the time of initiation, and the disciple, as he advances in practice, verifies the truth of the Master's words as he moves forward from plane to plane.

Blessed indeed is the temple of the body in which the five Sounds become audible and the Way to God opens up.

Fortunate is the house, the body, where the five-Sounded Word becomes manifest,
Blessed indeed is the sacred house which stands by It.[167]

GURU AMAR DAS

The wondrous Music of the five melodies,
God Himself may make audible if He so wisheth.[168]

GURU NANAK

The five Shabds peal continuously and overflow in their fullness,
Peerless are the five Sounds and unceasingly do they sport about.[169]

BHAI GURDAS

Five Sounds make the perfect Harmony,
And the limitless Song brings in wondrous intoxication.[170]

GURU ARJAN

The unending Melody is ever rich in Its fullness.[171]

KABIR

The five symphonies combine together to make the subtle Word perfect which lulls the mind to sleep forever and frees the soul from the trigunatmac bondage, never to return to the cycle of births and deaths.

Learn from the saints to live in harmony with the sublime Word,
The Word made perfect by the five symphonies constituting it.[172]

BHAI GURDAS

Now that One Word abides in me,
There can be no more coming into the world.[173]

GURU NANAK

My Beloved has taken me beyond the three *Gunas*,
And I remain ever absorbed in the sublime Word.[174]

GURU AMAR DAS

Day and night I live in perfect bliss,
Attuned as I am with the Word.[175]

GURU RAM DAS

Those who live in tune with the one Word are worthy of our highest esteem and adoration:

O Nanak! they deserve the greatest
homage,
Who live in harmony with the Word.[176]

GURU NANAK

Musical melodies within

The Primordial Form of the Lord is the Sound Principle, and myriads of tunes are playing at His Door all the time:

Fortunate I am to have the Lord as my
friend and companion,
For endless Symphonies keep playing at
His Door.[177]

GURU ARJAN

It is through Shabd that the creation came into being, with its various divisions and sub-divisions. Each division has its own peculiar musical notes which one hears as one rises from one higher plane to another. All the saints have given detailed account of these Sounds and in Gurbani particularly, we have an elaborate exposition on the subject.

It is a matter of common knowledge that the Hindus, as they visit a temple, strike the big bells hanging over the doorway. The Christian churches are invariably provided with a belfry and the bell is pulled by the bell ringer before the commencement of the church service. In the earlier Sikh

temples, either a conch was blown or a gong was struck, though this has now been replaced by playing a big drum (Naqara).

A careful research on the subject reveals that all these outer things, viz., bells, gongs, conches, etc., are but symbolic representations without, of the inner Sound Principle. Again, a careful study of the structure of all these places of worship also helps us to understand a significant religious element involved therein. Hindu temples have a dome-like shape with a big saucer-shaped bell hanging from the center of the dome, and whoever goes in for worship first clangs the bell. In the temple of the human body also, in the dome-like structure of the head, the pilgrim soul, as it enters the astral region, hears a sound that resembles that of a gong or a conch. Similarly, the Christian cathedrals are either in the formation of a big dome resembling the human head or are steeple-shaped, reminiscent of the ascending human nose, over which, as the soul concentrates at the still-point behind and between the two eyebrows, a bell-like sound is heard. Khawaja Hafiz, a mystic poet of great repute, speaks of It thus:

None knows where my Beloved abides,
But sure enough comes the sound of a bell
therefrom.

In Sikh scriptures it is stated:

> The Sound of the gong is heard everywhere.[178]
>
> GURU ARJAN

The Buddhist monasteries are also dome-shaped and are always embellished with two drums: one on the right and the other on the left. The scriptures of all religions contain references to the ringing sound of bells or the blowing of horns and conches: the reason being that this is the first experience of the soul as it rises above body consciousness and enters the temple of the Most High, the way to which begins from the root of the nose behind the two eyebrows. In the same way, countless melodies greet the soul as it proceeds onward on the Path; but five of them are generally considered and accepted as of immense value in leading and guiding one on the journey Godward. These melodious tunes interchangeably lead from plane to plane until one catching the native Melody reaches the Home of his Father, with the proper help and guidance of some Master-saint.

In the Vars of Bhai Gurdas, one comes across many references in this context:

> The soul hears the playing of *Singhi* (Zither).[179]

The unending Music plays and the Light
of *Toor* appears.[180]

In the silence of the soul there is effulgent
Light,
Be ye absorbed in the sweet exhilarating
Music.[181]

Hafiz says:

Listen ye to the heavenly orchestra,
With notes of dulcimer, flute, zither and
guitar.

These inner musical notes, which can be contacted through a Master, help in liberating the soul from the walls of finitude and take her up to the high home of the Father — the Kingdom of God — for that is the only Highway.

Musical melodies without

We see in our everyday experience that music, instrumental or vocal, plays an important role in religious congregations, whatever the nature, whether of the Yogins, the Hindus, the Christians or the Sikhs. We see the practice of Qawwali among the Muslims, the rich music in the quatrains of Omar Khayyam, and the poetical compositions of Shah Niaz, Khawaja Hafiz, Shamas Tabrez and Maulana Rumi. All the teachings of the Sikh Masters in the voluminous Granth Sahib are arranged on Rag forms — musical compositions. The fact is that effusions from the depths of one's soul flow

in unpremeditated numbers. Poetry is, in fact, the language of the soul, as much as prose is of the intellect. All these outer musical aids have, however, an inebriating effect that lull a person to a state of intoxication but cannot rouse in him Super-consciousness gradually expanding into the efflorescence of Universal Awakening and Cosmic Awareness.

> All the wild ecstatic dances in accompaniment with the outer music are of no avail to the mind that is both blind and deaf.[182]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

There are several reasons for this ineffectiveness. In the first place the music that one very often hears is not an out-pouring of the soul. It is a cheap commodity and merely a means of livelihood.

> A musician makes use of his tunes for the sake of earning a living
> And makes all sorts of gesticulations, waving himself from side to side.
> With rattling ripplets at the ankles, one calls himself a devotee of Ramdas and thereby earns a living,
> Another shows himself off with the observance of fasts, vigils and performance of set rituals,
> And still another sings out hymns and verses with a mind an utter stranger thereto.[183]
>
> GURU ARJAN

With the dog of hunger gnawing at the very vital chords within, one cannot possibly get over his sense of doubt and skepticism, with the result that he remains in darkness, far removed from Reality.

Secondly, most of the musicians spend all their time and energy in setting right the tunes and strains of their instruments, vocal or otherwise. A searching investigation of some of the Ragis (professional singers) revealed that they live in constant fear of losing their gift of popular tunes, and thus always try to show off what they may or may not actually possess. With the attention riveted all the time on the tunes alone, they simply sing off the Bani, regardless of its true import, and thereby not only lose sight of the inner meaning it conveys, but more often than not make such phonetical blunders that the true significance itself is distorted and lost.

> The Yogin plays the part with his hands,
> But the tunes do not ring in true.[184]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

The hearers too cannot understand the verses properly; unless they are well acquainted with it beforehand, they lose it in the strains and tunes of the accompanying music. The saints have, therefore, not attached any special importance to outer music, for it fails to develop true concentration, and consequently one cannot contact the Reality within, lose the sense of I-ness and get above

body consciousness, nor achieve inner peace and ecstasy.

O Yogin, with the music of the zither you
cannot develop concentration nor reach
the Truth,
O Yogin, your zither shall not give you
inner peace nor shall it rid you of your
egotism.[185]

GURU AMAR DAS

The time spent in preparing tunes and strains is a dead loss without any yield whatever. If this time were spent in attuning the soul with the inner Word, according to the instructions of the Master, one could gather many untold treasures of Divinity.

How long will you adjust to play the ripplets
and the guitar?
Why not spend the time in the Word instead
of in preparing the tunes?
How long will you dance and extend your
hands? [186]

GURU RAM DAS

It is no good to emotionalize, sing and dance wildly to the accompaniment of music, tire oneself out of breath and then faint away, sinking into oblivion that leads the spirit nowhere. The outer musical aids no doubt do help temporarily in gathering in the scattered outgoing faculties and wandering wits, but cannot lead one to higher Consciousness. On the other hand, they take one

to a state of forgetfulness both of one's self and of God. Beethoven tells us that music is the mediator between the spiritual and the sensual life. We seem to enter into a new mental world of our own which, of course, is superimposed on us by the musicians. But it fails to wean the mind from the inner cravings for the world and all that is worldly.

In brief, the teachings of the Masters are crystal-clear on this subject. We may be attracted by and get absorbed in the outer music, and all of us fully enjoy it, yet with all that, we cannot break loose from the three Gunas and transcend into the beyond. Without the aid of the True Music of the Soul that is going on everywhere and all the time, one remains a constant prey to sorrow and affliction in the realm of mind and matter.

> Engaged in useless pursuits, the musician keeps the people spell-bound in *Ragas,*
> He remains within the snares of the three *Gunas* and goes round in transmigration,
> As without contact with the All-pervading Word, one remains in suffering and sin.[187]
>
> GURU NANAK

> It is only the Word that can take one out of the delusive matter.[188]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

The saints have, therefore, never recommended any course of discipline, neither of music, nor

yogic practices nor anything else. They have always laid stress on the love of Naam or Word, the primal Sound Principle of Godhead.

> Some engage in the music of the bells,
> Some in fasts, vigils, beads and the like,
> Some smear their bodies with sandal paste.
> But I have only the Lord for my devotion.[189]
>
> GURU ARJAN

The Muslim devouts also preferred the practice of *Kalam-i-qadim*, the most ancient inner Call of God, to all kinds of outer musical melodies.

> Take the stop-cock of doubt and distrust
> from your ears,
> And listen to the Melody that is floating
> down from above.
> O brave soul, rise above the sensory plane,
> And hear thou Heaven's Music.
> What a pity to remain in the prison-house
> of the body,
> And not to listen to the Voice of the All-
> Merciful.

Bhai Gurdas, in his Kabit Sawais, tells us that by Nad-Bad (outer ragas and raginis — tunes and melodies), one cannot have access to the True and unending Melodies.

> So long as one enjoys *ragas* and *raginis*,
> He remains far removed from Anhad.[190]

The ragas and raginis (musical notes) have just a sensual appeal and one engaged in them remains entangled all his life, trapped unawares like a swift-footed stag or a mighty elephant, both of whom, in their ignorance, fall an easy prey to the wiles of the hunter.

> Just as a stag, by listening to the music of
> the drum, gets drenched in ignorance,
> So man without Shabd remains without
> peace and happiness.[191]

Far beyond Nad-Bad (outer music) lies the Anahat or the unstruck self-supporting Music.

> One has to go far beyond the musical tunes
> for union with the Anhad.[192]

It is only by communion with Anhad that one can rise above the physical plane of the three Gunas. This Godly Music helps us in breaking through the bondage of the world, and while remaining in the world, we cease to be of the world. Henceforth, like a lotus flower, we keep above the muddy water which is our natural habitat, and like a sea-fowl always keep high and dry, unaffected by the natural element in which we live.

In the Sikh scriptures the Nad-Bad has often been described as Bikh-bani or Bikh-Nad, meaning Bani or Nad with a mortal sting in it, for it injects one with a deadly poison from which one can find no escape.

Through palate and eyes we are all entangled,
And we get deadly poison through the ears,
Without the Shabd we are lost all the time.[193]

GURU NANAK

The ears get so attuned with the false music,
That the Music of God does not appeal to us.[194]

GURU AR.JAN

It is only by substituting the Nad-Bad with the Divine Melody that we can have any honor in His presence:

Leave off *Ragas* (outer music) and commune with the Word,
Then shalt thou be honored in His Court,
O Nanak! by meditating on Him according to the instructions of the Master, one rids himself of all vanities.[195]

GURU RAM DAS

The worldly-wise keep busy all the time in Nad-Bad which is nothing but sound arising from matter:

O Man! how shall I describe all this?
It is all but a false rattle from matter.[196]

GURU ARJAN

The Path of the Masters starts where all these ragas and raginis (musical notes and tunes) come to an end and one transcends the plane of the senses, beyond which the unstruck Music ceaselessly plays of Itself. One who is in tune with this Dhun-atmak Shabd (Song of the Soul) may sing as much as he likes and it benefits him to do so.

> He who has seen the Reality,
> His songs are acceptable, and
> He is honored in His Court.[197]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

It is only by contact with the Word that one can escape from the sea of delusive matter; outer musical notes of whatever description are of no avail.

> The mind keeps oscillating when sitting in devotion,
> But by listening to the Master's Word it gets stilled,
> The True Sound drives away all worldly attachments,
> The Shabd opens the eye to Reality.[198]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

> While engaged in sinful pursuits one sings *Ragas* (songs) and bears testimony to the truth of what they say, little knowing that without the Word all is a farce.[199]
>
> GURU NANAK

The inner Music of the soul is the real song. Its tunes are self-existing and self-supporting and need no outer aids of hands, feet or tongue, and lead to the source from whence they come, the Minstrel divine.

The sweet symphonies of the Music float
without the aid of hands and feet,
Whoever communes with this Music, he
beholds the Truth.[200]

GURU NANAK

The strains of the Heavenly Music become manifest only to one who is a true devotee of the Master; through a Master-soul many get benefited:

A devotee of the Lord sees and sings of His
glory,
He hears the playing of cymbals, bells,
zither, guitar and flute,
He surrenders his all to Him and gets to
the Truth,
Whoever believes in Him gets on the Path
and ends his round of births,
He doth escape the fires of hell, O Nanak!
and truly comes to his own.[201]

GURU ARJAN

The Yogins and Derveshes, however, make use of the outer music as an aid in developing the transcendental hearing.

The *Sufis,* in particular, call music a divine or celestial art, not only because of its use

> in religion and devotion, and because it is in itself a universal religion, but because of its fineness in comparison with all other arts and sciences. Every sacred scripture, holy picture or spoken words produces the impression of its identity and leaves its own image upon the mirror of the soul; but music stands before the soul without producing any impression whatever of either name or form of the objective world, thus preparing the soul to realize the infinite . . . .
>
> The Sufi, recognizing its importance, calls music *Ghiza-i-Ruh,* the food of the soul, and uses it as a source of spiritual perfection; for music fans the fire of the heart and the flame arising from it illumines the soul. The *Yogins* and ascetics blow *Narsinghas* (big-horned instruments) or *Shankha* (a conch or a big shell), to awaken in them the inner tone. *Derveshes* play *Nai* or *Algoza* (a double flute) for the same purpose. The bells and gongs in the churches and temples are meant to suggest to the thinker the same sacred Sound, and thus lead him towards the inner life.[202]
>
> HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN

Music used as the art of arts and the science of sciences, containing the fountain of all knowledge, is helpful in developing the finer sense of

hearing; but if practiced for exhibition and show or as a means of earning a living it loses its inherent charm and real utility.

The saints at times press music into their service as a handy aid in collecting an audience, for people are generally attracted more by music than by anything else.

Again, it is out of the abundance of heart that a man speaketh. As the true saints are imbued with the intoxication of the inner unstruck divine Music (Anahat), the spontaneous songs welling out of the depths of their soul bring about a tremendous impact on the listeners and at times transform their very being, instantaneously leading them to full spiritual efflorescence.

From a study of ancient tradition we see that the first divine messages were given in songs: the Song of Solomon, the Psalms of David and the Gathas of Zoroaster. The Vedas, the Puranas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Zend Avesta, the Kabala and the Sikh Scriptures are all in verse. Kabir, Nanak, Baba Farid, Hazrat Babu, Surdas, Dharamdas, Sadna and other saints used mostly verse for disseminating their ideas. The very atmosphere in the gatherings of the saints is charged with spiritual vibrations and often some of the devout listeners get into Wajd or a state of intoxication at their very sight. The two simple words "Hari Bole" addressed to a washerman by Chai-

tanya Mahaprabhu, the sage of Bengal, turned the very washing ghat into a veritable ring of dancers with the chant of "Hari Bole" on their lips. This then is the power of real music coming from within the secret chambers of the heart.

BOOK THREE

Amrit

Nectar or the Water of Life

Amrit

AMRIT or Aab-i-Hayat or Maha Ras is the elixir of life, for whoever partakes of it gets everlasting life and escapes forever from the otherwise interminable round of births and deaths. The sages and seers wandered in quest of It, but nowhere in the wide world were they able to find It. Is It then a chimera or mirage? The saints in reply have repeatedly said that Amrit is something real and solid. It is the Water of Immortality, which lies hidden and buried within the depths of the soul, encrusted with the dust of ages, and may be delved into even now and rediscovered, if one has the patience to do as he is bidden.

In the scriptures of the various religions we come across references to the sacred Water of Life. The Muslim divines describe It as Aab-i-Haiwan or Aab-i-Hayat and always suggested Its use to the world-weary pilgrims. It is also called Chasma-i-Kausar. The Hindu scriptures call It *Mansarover* or the Pool of Nectar (Amritsar), which if tasted would grant life everlasting. In the Vedas we read of It as Soma Ras, which granted Cosmic Awareness or Universal Consciousness to the Rishis and the Munis who partook of It in ages long ago. The saints generally call It Amritsar or the pool

or the fount of Nectar. Christ often spoke of It as the Water of Life.

> And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.[1]

> Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.[2]
>
> CHRIST

In the Holy Bible, it is stated that Christ used to bring the dead to life. At one place, he is said to have administered this Water of Life to a Samaritan lady. From all this, it is abundantly clear that Christ freely made use of this Water of Life in treating the ills of mankind. And very often he refers to the Voice of God as well.

> For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.[3]
>
> ST. PAUL

> When the dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.[4]
>
> CHRIST

By these means, he is said to have redeemed no less than one hundred forty and four thousand souls.[5]

The Rishis and Munis or the holy men of old and even the saints in comparatively recent times tasted of the Water of Life and made their followers drink from the great fountainhead, and it is possible even today to partake of this Water with the grace and kindness of some Master-saint.

Amrit: What It is

From a careful study of the scriptures, we learn that the Water of Life or the Nectar is nothing but the Word or Logos of Christ; Naam or Shabd of the saints; Kalma of the Muslims; and Nad of the Vedic Rishis.

Amrit is the True Naam (or Word),
But It cannot be described in words.
He who tastes of It by attuning with the
Word is accepted at His Court.[6]

GURU AMAR DAS

O dear self, Amrit is the Hari Naam,
And one gets access to It through a
Master-soul.[7]

GURU RAM DAS

The Word of God is the elixir of life and is
a panacea for all the ills of the world;
Bhikhan says, It is with the Grace of the
Guru that one finds a Way to Salvation.[8]

BHIKHAN

Master's Word is pure ambrosia,
A draught of It quenches all thirst.[9]

GURU AMAR DAS

The treasure of the Word is the Water of Life (Amrit),
Drink ye, my brothers, to your hearts' fill.[10]

The Way to the Nectarian treasure of Word (Truth) one finds through a saint,
Blessed are the saints who are ever devotedly in tune with It.[11]

GURU ARJAN

Amrit becomes manifest by devotion to the Master,
O Nanak! Shabd is the Nectar of Life,
And a rare devotee of the Master partakes of It.[12]

GURU RAM DAS

The Limitless Song *(Anhad Bani)* has an ambrosial effect,
It lulls both the body and the mind to a quiet repose.[13]

GURU ARJAN

O Thou who makes manifest the elixir of Bani within, I make an offering of myself to Thee,
For thou hast implanted in me the *Amrit Bani* (Word) and I remain absorbed in the holy Naam.[14]

O God! wonderful are Thy ways and
means,
The mind in the gyres can hardly
understand them.
Thou hast attuned it with the delectable
(Amrit) Bani,
And the immortal ambrosial Word (Shabd)
is now fully manifest.[15]

GURU AMAR DAS

Those who are proud of Thy Naam are
completely saturated with it,
O Nanak! there is but one Amrit (Nectar)
and none besides lt.[16]

GURU ANGAD

The Naam of Hari is the elixir and a
draught of It makes one contented.
O Nanak! he who drinks of It escapes all
delusion.[17]

GURU AMAR DAS

Whoever deals in the wealth of Naam
lives on the everlasting manna of life.[18]

GURU AR.JAN

The Word of the Master is extremely sweet,
Such an elixir one finds within,
Whosoever tastes of It, gets perfected,
O Nanak! such a one remains in perpetual
bliss.[19]

GURU NANAK

The Word of the Master is the Water of
Life,
To drink It is to quench all thirst.
The mind verily gets drenched in Truth,
And always remains absorbed in Truth.[20]

GURU AMAR DAS

The riches of Word (Truth) one gets
through the grace of a Master,
Blessed are the saints who are ever in tune
with It.[21]

GURU ARJAN

Amrit is often used for Hari (God), Hari Kirtan (the Divine Song) and Maha Ras (exhilarating vintage). He alone gets out of desires who engages in the Word. Hari is the fruit of the Tree of Life (Amrit-phal) and is a gift from God.

False are all the designs and colors that we
see,
A drop of the Water of Life is a blessing
that comes from a Sadhu.[22]

GURU ARJAN

Hari Naam alone is Amrit; commune ye
with It through the grace of a Master,
Hari Naam is All-pure; a contact with It
ends pain and sorrow.[23]

GURU RAM DAS

A rare soul drinks the cup of divine
vintage (Hari Ras),

O Nanak, he gets the reward of the Divine
Word and thereafter lives by It.[24]

GURU ARJAN

I sacrifice my all on Him, who implanted
the life-giving Naam in me,
The ambrosia of Naam is supremely
sweet,
One drinks of It by the direction and Will
of the Master.[25]

GURU AMAR DAS

The scriptures tell us that what we call Amrit or the Water of Life is just the same thing as Naam or the Word. A touch with this divine vintage gives God-intoxication:

Those who wholly depend on Thy Naam,
are completely dyed in Thy color,
O Nanak! there is only one exhilarating
vintage and no other.[26]

GURU ANGAD

In this age of Kali Yuga, there is no other Wine but of Amrit.

God's Naam is Amrit in the present Kali
age,
This wealth one may get by devotion
to a Sadhu.[27]

GURU ARJAN

Amrit is Sound Principle

Amrit is Divine Harmony, and is reverberating all the time everywhere. It is the Bread of Life (Manna or Heavenly Food) on which the spirit feeds and thrives.

With the meeting of the Satguru, the ever-restless mind gets steady and one finds the tenth door,
There the Melody divine — the Bread of Life — holds the universe tight,
Countless are the strains and endless, ever saturated in Truth,
O Nanak! the contact thereto comes through a God-man alone,
No more the wild goose chase, for Homeward one is led.[28]

GURU AMAR DAS

A disciplined soul makes one self-disciplined and contented he becomes,
Absorption in the Master awakens the inner Music of the soul;
By drinking the Nectar divine, one is contented and rises in His Presence,
Listen ye to the great Music of the harp and taste It night and day,
A rare soul alone understands It through the Master's grace.[29]

GURU NANAK

Amrit is Light Principle

The vision-center behind and between the two eyes, if and when directed steadily toward Gagan (inner horizon), gradually gets lighted up. It starts with flashes as from lightning and in course of time makes manifest a starry sky, and the Sun and the Moon come to view besides several other lighted scenes. When the spirit transcends all these and enters Trikuti, the headquarters of the subtle region, there she beholds the Sun of Brahmand and beyond Brahmand, the Moon of Par Brahmand Region. We come across frequent references to the higher spiritual phenomena in the writings of Sant Tulsi Sahib and many others.

Blessed indeed is the Ambrosial Sound of
God, the contact whereof comes through
the grace of the Master;
The darkness is dispelled and one gets
enlightenment just as the Sun chases
away the darkness of the night;
Then one sees the otherwise Invisible, the
Inexpressible and the Unfathomable
One, as explained by the Master.[30]

GURU RAM DAS

Wondrous sweet is the Nectarean Voice of
the Master,
Fortune may favor a rare soul to relish It.
Light within, one quaffs the quintessence
Divine,

And hears the True Sound at the seat of the soul.[31]

GURU AMAR DAS

Pure is the Light and *Soma Juice* is the Word,
A contact with them grants a selfless life of everlasting bliss.[32]

GURU ARJAN

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.[33]

ST. PAUL

Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a Light unto my Path.[34]

THE PSALMS

Amrit: Its location

The divine ambrosia can be had by inversion and not anywhere in the world outside. One can find It only if one transcends into the spiritual regions above the physical body. A draught of the Water of Immortality is enough to grant life everlasting to the individual. In order to reach the *Hauz-i-Kausar* or the pool of nectar, one has to dig deep into the human self.

The human body is the temple of God wherein dwell both the soul and the Over-soul. This

temple has quite a number of instruments through which the Self within works in the physical plane without. These instruments may be likened to doors and windows through which the soul and the mind go out into the world in search of worldly pleasures. But the soul itself is imprisoned in the body and knows no way to escape therefrom. The body has nine visible portals: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth, rectum and the generative organ. So long as the spirit remains absorbed in the sensory pleasures, it cannot have an access to the Heavenly regions and, therefore, cannot taste the elixir of life. Besides these nine outlets there is a hidden spring-door behind the center of the eyes. When the spirit, by means of concentration, is gathered up at this center, it becomes qualified for ingress into higher realms with all the spiritual heritage therein.

A whore of spirit that delights in the nine
sense organs does not get to the
wondrous Reality,
Kabir therefore saith: all the nine chambers
lie deserted — Essence is only in the
tenth.[35]

KABIR

The nine portals lead to naught — nectar
may be sipped at the tenth.[36]

The Master manifests the Water of Life at
the tenth gate,

And listening to the Divine Music, one is led to stillness absolute.[37]

GURU RAM DAS

There is hardly any need now to search without, when the Master has shown the Reality within;
The Unending Music swells in the tenth chamber, there one realizes the ambrosial Word.[38]

GURU ARJAN

The nectar of Divine Harmony is in the human body, and whoever delves for It, gets It within. All outer activities on the plane of the senses, like pilgrimages, penances and fasts, rites and rituals, forms and formularies, are of no avail. In this Path, one has to lose himself before he can rediscover himself.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.[39]

CHRIST

It means that one can have life eternal only when one learns and practices the art and science of death-in-life by rising above the body-consciousness at will. This is the only Way to get the Water of Immortality, and there is none besides it.

The Naam or the Word is the bestower of all gifts,

And It ever abides in the human body.[40]

GURU ARJAN

Everyone is endowed with the Water of Life,
None but the destined one can drink It.[41]

KABIR

The fountain of Amrit is bubbling over,
One can have a taste of It through the Word of God.[42]

Like musk in the deer is hid the nectar within,
And like the deer, a mad search is made without.[43]

GURU AMAR DAS

A Sufi saint says,

Beloved is in the house, and I make a search in the world,
With a spring of crystal water within, I go athirst.

Inside the head, there is an inverted well with an opening behind the eyes. A current of nectar issuing forth from the well is coming into the body; but the unfortunate spirit, ever busy in the outer pursuits of the world, is not destined to have a taste of It, and so continues in sorrow.

Everything of any value is in the body and nothing is without. Whoever has, through the

grace of the Master, found the treasures within, is indeed blessed and enjoys true happiness both within and without. He drinks the ambrosial showers as they fall and is ever in a state of blissful intoxication. The Way to It, however, lies through some Master-saint, and the spirit, torn away from her source ever since the day of creation, is once again reconciled with her Creator and lives in perpetual peace and beatitude.

Everything is within and nothing without,
He who searches without is yet in ignorance.
He who finds it within himself through a Master-soul,
Ever lives in a state of bliss and beatitude.
The Amrit falls down in a big shower,
And the mind enjoys the Sound Current.
Night and day he lives in perfect satiety,
And sings the praises of God.
The aeons of separation come to an end,
And the blighted tree once again blossoms forth.
Gifted with right knowledge, he revels in Naam,
All hail to the Master! that brought this about.[44]

GURU ARJAN

The pool of nectar lies in the folds of the mind; it is only when the mind grows still that it becomes manifest. A contact with Naam grants eternal life.

O Nanak! drink within the elixir of life as a pure gift of the Guru,
He alone takes in the divine drink, who is destined from above.[45]

GURU ANGAD

The mind must first be purged of all ills, before one can receive the life-giving ambrosia.

Through instructions of the Master, the mind becomes pure,
And then the sacred pool comes to view.[46]

GURU AMAR DAS

Who can taste this Nectar

From the writings of the Masters, it appears that one cannot taste this nectar until one learns to die while alive. One has, therefore, to "forsake the flesh for the spirit"[47] for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God."[48]

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself,
And take up his cross daily and follow me.
For whosoever will save his life shall lose it,
But whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.[49]

CHRIST

We have been leading a physical existence only. We know how to live on the physical plane and

that we do with the help of our physical senses. We have never known that there is anything beyond and that we have senses subtle and causal, apart from the physical, and can make use of them by transcending the physical plane. There are tremendous possibilities in man, fashioned as he is in the image of God, but alas! in the mighty swirl of mind and matter we have lost hold of the lifeline within and are drifting headlong in the stream of life with no anchorage. A Master-saint is the only refuge and a haven where one may for a while have a respite and time to think over his sad plight. And how does the Master help here? He shows one how to leave the body by withdrawing the sensory currents at the seat of the soul. This transcension of the physical body is called "death-in-life." It is the *Open Sesame* that unlocks the door leading into the Kingdom of God.

If thou wishest to have everlasting life,
Learn thou to die in the body, before death overtakes thee.

MAULANA RUMI

He who knows how to die while living drinks Amrit (the Water of Life),
My mind is convinced of the need and is devoted to the Master's instructions.[50]

GURU RAM DAS

Learn to die while alive, for in the end death overtakes all.

BABA FARID

Learn how to die that you may begin to live.

THOMAS A KEMPIS

Remember ye the Naam and love the Lord unceasingly,
Live in constant devotion to God's elect.
Those who live-in-death drink the Water of Life,
And their minds get absorbed through the instruction of the Master.[51]

GURU RAM DAS

Drink ye the Water of Life — a pure gift from the Master,
With an easy death, ye shall rise in eternal life.[52]

GURU NANAK

Spiritual Comfort is God's free gift and not of our own merit. It comes only through the grace of some Godman. He is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." The absorption in the Master alone helps one to gain the pool of nectar within, and this is called a second birth or resurrection.

Amrit: How one gets It

(i) Through the Grace of God:

God's Word is the Water of Life,
One gets It through His grace.
Remember God every moment of your life,

And make this your constant practice.[53]

GURU ARAN

Everyone sows his field, but blessed are such as God approves of,
With the help of the Master is sown the seed of divine Nectar,
And then one gets the fruit of the Tree of Life (Amrit).[54]

GURU RAM DAS

(ii) Through preordination. By one's good deeds one may get Amrit within, if so ordained.

One with earned merit in the past ages may by preordination find Nectar within,
Highly blessed is God's Word; one may taste of It through the instructions of the Master.[55]

GURU RAM DAS

(iii) Through devotion to Satguru. Amrit is all pervading in Its fullness, but we can hardly taste It on the plane of the senses.

Water, water everywhere,
But not a drop to drink.

Amrit is much sought after; even the gods and goddesses are in search of It, but one can partake of It only through the grace of the Master.

Amrit, which is sought after by Rishis,
Munis and gods, that I have found with
the aid of the Master,
I have got Amrit through the Master's
grace and Truth is now implanted
within me.[56]

GURU AMAR DAS

One cannot, by his own unaided efforts, get to the Hauz-i Kausar or the Fountain of Life. For this purpose, we have of necessity to seek the aid of a living Master who has for himself found this Fountainhead and is competent to lead others to it.

And he showed me a pure river of Water of
Life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of
the throne of God and of the Lamb.[57]

ST. JOHN

The sovereign remedy of Naam lies in
the pool of the crystal clear Waters of
Life which one gets by the grace of the
Master,
Nanak therefore saith: one preordained to
get It meets a Master and thereby says
goodbye to his ills.[58]

The elixir of life (Amrit) one gets from a
Master,
And, thereafter, he lives by the bread of the
holy Word,

All patterns, all colors and all designs are from Him,
A rare soul, O Nanak! lives by this Amrit.[59]

O my Master! I would like to be a sacrifice unto Thee,
Thy very sight is a great bliss, for Thou out of compassion, hast given me the elixir of Naam.[60]

GURU ARJAN

God Himself directs and grants communion with His holy Word,
By His grace one meets the Master and drinks of the ambrosia (Amrit).[61]

Shabd is Amrit and Bani, the Voice of God, as well;
By devotion to the Master, It has become audible.[62]

GURU AMAR DAS

(iv) By acceptance of Master's Will and commandments.

If ye love me, keep my commandments. [63]

CHRIST

O mind! lead a life acceptable to the Master,
For He shall lead thee to thy Native Home,

And grant thee the Water of Life to quench thy thirst,
And all comforts and blessings shall be thine.[64]

The gift of elixir depends on the sweet Will and Pleasure of the Master,
A rare soul may get It without much effort.[65]

GURU AMAR DAS

In the company of the saints, ye partake of the precious Amrit.[66]

GURU RAM DAS

A drop of the divine vintage is a great blessing,
You can drink of It through some *Sadh.*[67]

O Nanak! he alone lives who practices the Naam,
And partakes of the Water of Life with saints.[68]

GURU ARJAN

Amrit, in Its fullness, abides in a saint, and His glance of grace is enough to transform a person.

Satguru is Amrit incarnate for He is one with Hari (God),
O Nanak! one remembers God through grace and finds Him through the Master.[69]

GURU AMAR DAS

Satguru is the pool of nectar and a blessed
soul dips into It,
And gets cleansed of the dirt of ages and
communes with the pure Naam.[70]

GURU RAM DAS

Man comes into the world just to find the river of the Water of Life, and this he can do through a Master-soul. But all orders and sects based on outer observances are a source of sorrow, duality and affliction, and one cannot reach the Fountain of Life through such practices. Without the Amrit of Naam, nothing is of any avail, and whoever gets entangled in them cannot find a way out.

The precious Water of Life for which you
came into the world, you can get from a
Master-saint,
Rise above all thoughts of distinctive labels
of various religious and clerical orders,
Cast aside all raiments and rituals, as also
all cunning and cleverness and mental
oscillations,
These shall avail thee not on this Path.[71]

GURU NANAK

Amrit: who can get It

Out of millions of devotees, only a rare one who sits at the feet of a living Master gets contact with the elixir of life.

God alone grants the heavenly ambrosia,
A rare soul out of myriads may get It.[72]

Verily, verily the Amrit showers from above,
But a rare devotee partakes of It,
The mind blossoms forth and sings of His glory.[73]

GURU AMAR DAS

A devotee of the Master engages in the pursuit,
And finds the Amrit and becomes truly blessed,
O Man! commune with the Naam day and night,
Thou shalt lose all impurities and become sanctified.[74]

GURU NANAK

The divine Amrit falls down in showers,
A devotee through the grace of the All-pervading gets It.[75]

The enlivening story of God is truly sublime; we have had a taste of it through the words of the Master;
Heaven's light dawned, dispelling all darkness, just as sun chases away the night,
The Invisible, the Indescribable, and the Unknowable, became manifest through the instructions of the Master. [76]

GURU RAM DAS

It is bubbling over in its fullness in the temple of the human body, but a man of the world cannot get access to it.

In the body lies the Fount of the Water of Life,
But a sensual person cannot have a taste of It.[77]

GURU AMAR DAS

I would make an offering of myself at the feet of my Master, who unraveled to me the great mystery,
The world without the Water of Life is but a wasteland, and a worldly-wise man does not even know of It.[78]

GURU NANAK

Amrit: Its merits

The merits of Amrit are countless indeed. A contact with It renders all other joys and pleasures insipid and makes one a true renunciate.

No longer does he hunger and thirst for things of the world,
He sees Him as All-pervading in the core of his heart;
Dyed in the color of Amrit, he renounces all and revels in his Master and his teachings. [79]

GURU NANAK

The Water of Life abides in each heart in Its richness. He who tastes of It knows Its exhilarating influence. Communion with the Power of God is union with God, and one becomes fearless even of death, the last enemy of man. Not only do they achieve freedom but many another along with them gets freed.

Those who relish It become fearless by
saturating themselves in the sweet elixir
of Naam.
This one gets through the grace of God,
and transcends the realm of *Kal*.[80]

GURU AMAR DAS

Amrit, in Its fullness, lies within,
Ye may relish It by an actual contact,
Thou hast cheated the whole world which
is going round and round;
He who follows the Master derives the
greatest benefit,
He who tastes of the true ambrosia is not
molested by death;
Not only does he achieve freedom,
But many another he puts on the Path.[81]

GURU RAM DAS

The wondrous gift of Amrit confers many supernatural powers on him who partakes of It, and grants peace and ecstasy. Through It one is rid of all pain and sorrow, doubt and skepticism, lusts and passions, and is freed from the most ancient

malady of egotism; and all desires and cravings fall off like dry leaves as if by an enchanter driven. The mind too gets steady and rarefied. Ultimately, one gains salvation and attains to the state of Sehaj, and is honored in the Presence of God.

From the teachings of the Masters, who laid great emphasis on communion with Him, it is clear that Amrit is nothing but Naam, Shabd or Word, and this Pool of Nectar lies within each one of us, but becomes manifest only through a glance of grace from some true Saint who enables us to partake of It.

Amongst the Sikhs there is the practice of preparing "amrit" with the help of a sword. By a careful study of the matter we realize that this too is, in fact, prepared with the help of Naam or Bani. The consciousness is first turned inward so as to contact the Inner Sound Principle, and then as it comes down saturated in the divine it is turned without, converting the preparation into an Amrit. It is only a competent Master (a true Khalsa with full refulgent light in him) who can, by his glance of grace, prepare the Amrit, and whoever partakes of It becomes truly intuned. A saint with eyes bubbling over with divine intoxication can, in an instant, take one to the mount of transfiguration and make him into a saint.

A glance of grace from a saint makes thee a saint.[82]

GURU ARJAN

One can drink of the divine Nectar through the grace of a Satguru, and truly blessed are they who get an access thereto: they rise into the light of Universal Consciousness and gain salvation from the endless wheel of births and deaths, and live in perpetual ecstasy enjoying His beatitude.

By drinking of the ambrosia one lives forever,
By communion with the Lord, one is ever in a state of bliss;
While in the world, one remains in contentment without any cares and anxieties;
Let the mind and soul be intoxicated by the sweet fragrance of the lotus feet of God,
Nanak says: O Lord! I am ever devoted to such as *Chatrak* feels exhilarated by the rain drop.[83]

GURU ARJAN

BOOK FOUR

KIRTAN

Celestial Music or Divine Harmony

Kirtan

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

DRYDEN

ORDINARILY, when the hymns of the saints are sung with accompaniment by musical instruments, it is called "Kirtan." This music — vocal or instrumental — has a great appeal to the mind because of its power of attraction. It does for a while produce stillness in the mind and the subtle faculties.

Instrumental or vocal music plays an important part in almost all religious congregations of Yogins, Hindus, Sufis, Christians and Sikhs.

Each one of us is attracted by one or the other of two things: beautiful forms or patterns, or sweet music; and the latter is far more magnetic than the former. It has a gripping influence on all living creatures. Take for instance the fleet-footed stag, the antlered monarch; no steed can compete with him in speed. But he is entrapped and captured by huntsmen by the power of music. The hunter blows his horn and the stag, attracted by it, quickly surrenders himself before the power of music. Similarly, the poisonous snake, for the

time being, forgets his nature under the influence of the snake charmer's vina, and spends the rest of his life shut up in a basket. The effect of music on human beings is also tremendous, but one feels enraptured only as long as the music lasts; one does not get beyond the emotional influence and remains in the elemental sphere.

From the study of the sacred lore and the teachings of the Masters, we learn that the Inner Music of the Soul or the Sound Current or Harmony is ceaselessly going on in each individual and can, if contacted and listened to attentively, lead to ultimate salvation. This Dhun is described in the Granth Sahib as Akhand Kirtan or Unending Harmony.

> In this age, know ye that Shabd is the Kirtan;
> Devotion to Shabd dispels all egotism.[1]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

> The blessed Naam is the veritable Kirtan of
> the Lord in the *Kali Yuga* (the Iron Age)
> and is the essence of all devotion,
> One can engage in Kirtan of Hari Naam
> through the teachings of the Master.[2]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

The Kirtan or Naam or Shabd is the only means to spiritual advancement. The reverberation of this Kirtan is all-pervading and all-embracing, but It becomes manifest only when one, by a process

of practical self-analysis and inversion, rises above body-consciousness. It is characterized by a "Dhun" (Musical Sound), the experience whereof one gets in the Sukhman or Shahrag, the central chord in the forehead.

> The Music of *Sehaj* playing at Thy door doth become manifest in my forehead.[3]
>
> KABIR

In this Iron Age, the last in the series of cyclic ages, there is no other spiritual practice as fruitful and effective as Kirtan or Naam or Hari Kirtan, and this is the be-all and end-all of all types of religious and meritorious deeds.

> In the Fourth Age, O Man! Naam is a priceless treasure;
> Repetition, strict disciplines and pilgrimages suited the earlier ages,
> In this age, Kirtan of Hari Naam is the sovereign remedy.[4]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

> This is the season of *Hari Kirtan*,
> And Hari Naam is the highest devotion,
> O, sow thy farm with the seeds of Hari Naam,
> The sowing of all other seeds will be of no avail,
> A sheer waste of time and of labor.[5]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

One can get a living contact or touch with this Kirtan through the grace of some Master-soul.

The crest-jewel of Ram Naam Kirtan (the Divine Melody) is with the Master,
And he who follows the Master's teachings, the Master makes that manifest to him.[6]

GURU RAM DAS

In the scriptures, it is stated that those alone can practice and commune with Hari Kirtan who come in close contact with some Master-soul. It is by devotion to the Master that one can contact the Grand Harmony.

He who is devoted to a Satguru,
Is ever engaged in Hari Kirtan.[7]

GURU AMAR DAS

From the day a person comes in close touch with a *Sadhu*, he takes a turn for the better,
Ever in bliss, he engages in Kirtan and comes close to the Creator and Designer of destinies.[8]

GURU ARJAN

In this age, Hari Kirtan is the highest discipline, for one meets Hari through the Satguru;

I shall offer myself as a sacrifice to my Master, for it is He who has manifested in me the hidden Word.[9]

GURU RAM DAS

He gets the Food of Unending Kirtan,
Whoever, O Nanak! meets a competent Master.[10]

Blessed is he who serves the saints,
Through saints one engages in Hari Kirtan.[11]

Through a saint one gets into touch with the Naam,
Through a saint one sings the Hari Kirtan.[12]

Through a Sadh one sings the Hari Kirtan;
Nanak saith — blessed soul gets It.[13]

Through a Sadh, I have got the merit of Kirtan,
The Path of death has faded away from my ken.[14]

GURU ARJAN

I have got love for the lotus feet of the Lord,
Through a saint, the mind has become purified,
And I am ever engaged in the Kirtan (Song) of Hari.[15]

KABIR

The mind is dyed in the elixir of Naam and
is fully satiated,
And through the grace of a saint, sings the
Song Divine (Kirtan),
And the Imperishable dwells therein.[16]

Through a Sadh, one delights in the holy
Music in this age,
O Nanak! hereafter, he does not return to
this world.[17]

GURU ARJAN

They who follow the Satguru ever listen to
the holy Harmony,
The elixir of the Word abides in them and
they get absorbed in the True Sound.[18]

GURU AMAR DAS

The holy Music comes from a Sadhu, and
communion with It is the highest virtue,
Nanak saith: he who is preordained alone
gets this gift.[19]

GURU ARJAN

The *Hari Kirtan* is a pure gift from the Master and one cannot merit It until one transcends the body. Just as a lodestone attracts a piece of iron, similarly the Dhun or the Word emanating from Godhead attracts the soul and pulls her up to the feet of the Lord. The human mind is always hankering after pleasures of one sort or another, but no worldly pleasure can secure for it any degree of salvation. The only remedy for stilling and subduing the mind is Hari Kirtan or Naam, hearing which

this hydra-headed serpent gets intoxicated as it were by some magic potion, and lies still as if in a death-trance, unmindful of the sensory organs through which it usually works. Whoever has subjugated his mind has had to do so by means of Hari Kirtan or Naam. With It, soul is roused from age-long slumber and rises into cosmic and super-cosmic awareness. This is a new birth, the birth of spirit, called regeneration or resurrection. Henceforth, the spirit escapes from the network of Karmic impressions, which get singed and are rendered infructuous. It restores the Kingdom of God to the spirit and grants her everlasting peace and salvation.

> A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.[20]
>
> EZEKIEL

The manifestation of the Sound Current then depends upon the sweet Will and Pleasure of a Master-saint, and one cannot contact It until one transcends the sensory plane of the physical body. This is the only Way to salvation from the bondage of mind and matter; there is no other Way.

> All ecstatic gesticulations and chanting of songs are of no avail to one blind and deaf,
> Full of greed and scepticism within, he cannot have Heaven's Light to guide him on the Path.[21]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

While engaged in sinful pursuits one sings
Ragas (songs)
And bears testimony to the truth of what
they say,
Little knowing that without the Word all
is a farce.[22]

GURU NANAK

The merits of Kirtan

Kirtan is highly efficacious both here and hereafter.

O dear self, engage in such a Kirtan,
That may be of use to thee here and
hereafter.[23]

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan purifies one of all feelings of envy, hatred and enmity.

The devotees of the Master who listen to
the divine Song (Kirtan),
Their minds get purified of ill-will and
envy.[24]

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan is a potent remedy for removing all ills and afflictions — physical, mental and accidental.

The Merciful God has in His mercy
removed all doubts and distrust,
O Nanak! through the holy Song I am in
bliss, freed from all sorrow.[25]

One who sings the celestial strains,
He is never in pain, sorrow and affliction.[26]

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan frees one from all the deadly sins and lusts of the flesh.

Sing the perfect Melody, the bestower of all bliss and destroyer of ills,
The Melody is sharper than the two-edged sword,
And kills the deadly sins of lust, passion, greed, attachment and egotism.[27]

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan awakens one from a long-drawn sleep of ages upon ages.

Engaged in devotion one takes to the Divine Song,
And is awakened from the long-drawn slumber of ages.[28]

One discards the lust for others' wealth, flesh and blood,
When through the grace of the Master, he awakens by the holy Sound.[29]

Do such actions as would not contaminate thee,
The mind will awaken to Reality by listening to the divine Melody *(Harikirtan)*.[30]

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan gives immunity from the grip of death.

"Approach not," says *Yama* (the Lord of Death) to his messengers,
''The place where a Sadhu dwells or the Holy Word reverberates, or else we shall all be doomed."[31]

He in whom the Lord's Song abides,
He is freed from all sorrows, ills and afflictions,
And the fear of death.[32]

He who sings the Song Divine,
The angel of death affects him not.[33]

The minions of death cannot come near him,
Who sings the Song Divine in company of the Master.[34]

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan grants perfect peace, satiety and bliss.

The devotee is ever in a state of intoxication,
The Lord had mercy and I got dyed in the color of His Song.[35]

O Nanak! God has made a slave of me,
I now live and enjoy the divine glory.[36]

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan is acceptable to God, and man has his wishes fulfilled.

Absorption in the sweet melodies of Music Divine (Kirtan, Rag, Nag and Dhun) is the goal of my life.
O Nanak, It is acceptable to God and one gets his desires fulfilled.[37]

Communion with God ends the cycle of transmigration,
One becomes acceptable even while living,
And engages in the Divine Music of the Lord.[38]

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan holds priority over all religious practices.

O Nanak! engage in Hari Kirtan, for that verily is the true religion.[39]

GURU ARJAN

In infinite compassion, the saints gave out,

One gets the merit of all religions by listening to the divine Melody.[40]

GURU TEG BAHADUR

Kirtan is the True Yoga.

Thy Word is the cause of all this creation,
Listening to the Kirtan is a veritable yoga.[41]

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan is the Saving Lifeline for all.

The mind gets disciplined through Hari
Kirtan (the Song of the Lord);
Whoever sings of the Lord, hears or repeats
His praises, is surely saved.[42]

As the Master taught me, so do I declare,
Listen ye to what Nanak saith:
It is by Kirtan alone that one is saved.[43]

GURU ARJAN

Kirtan steadies and stills the mind.

What the Word that keeps one spellbound?
What the Way that takes one above
pleasure and pain?
What the Path that leads into the Beyond
(Par Brahm)?
What the Discipline that contacts the holy
Harmony?
The devotee of the Master leads a life that
may help him to reach the Beyond (Par
Brahm),
And he constantly recites the Divine Song.[44]

GURU RAM DAS

The seeker asks for but one gift,
If it so pleases the Lord, He may have mercy,
Grant me Thy glance of grace that may
quell the mind and fill it with Song
Divine.[45]

GURU ARJAN

BOOK FIVE

Bani and Gurbani

Scriptures and Inner Music

Bani and Gurbani

THE term Bani is rather difficult to define and to understand; its significance goes far deeper than is commonly supposed. In common parlance, it means words that we read, write or speak. But saints have used it with an altogether different meaning. Ordinarily there is not much difference in the terms Bani, Shabd and Naam, for the three are used interchangeably to denote one and the same thing.

Bani or Naam is of two kinds: Varan Atmak and Dhun Atmak. The former is an outward expression of inner feelings by means of words through reading, writing or speaking; and the other is the Inner Sound Principle or Sound Current.

Varan Atmak Bani

Varan Atmak Bani can be classified into four subdivisions: Baikhri, Madhma, Pashyanti and Pra.

Baikhri: These are labial sounds or sounds which are uttered with the aid of tongue and lips.

Madhma: These are guttural sounds which are produced in the throat or at the back or root of the tongue and palate.

Pashyanti: These are sounds which originate from the heart center.

Pra: These are sounds which arise through vibrations from the navel center.

These four types of sounds or words are related in one or another form with the six physical ganglionic centers, and have nothing to do with Naam or the Word or Logos, which is contacted above the six ganglions, is capable of granting salvation, and is technically called *Dhun Atmak Bani* or the Eternal Sound Current, the source of God's Light and Life Principles. It is, in fact, the Eternal and Unchangeable Voice of God.

The Water of Life is given by the Satguru,
It is made manifest at the tenth door,
There the *Dhun Bani* reverberates without an end,
And leads one to the state of *Sehaj*.[1]

GURU RAM DAS

The five strains commingling forth produce sweet Harmony.
The Bani flows in unending streams all the time.[2]

GURU ARJAN

There are four different forms* of Thy
creation and four various modes of
speech;
But apart from Naam, one wanders
without a lead.

GURU AMAR DAS

The entire creation expresses itself in one or another kind of Varan Atmak sound and not in the Dhun Atmak and as such wanders about restlessly in the giant wheel of life.

The Varan Atmak language is also known as the language of the Pranas or the vital airs for it depends on different types of vibrations in the air; but as said above, it leads to a wilderness with no way out.

We speak and hear the airy language,
And the mind gets entangled in oblivion.[3]

GURU NANAK

Dhun Atmak Bani

This is the Eternal Sound Current reverberating endlessly in every living thing. It is an Unwritten Law and an Unspoken Language. It is above the ken of elements and the six chakras.

* According to the Hindu scriptures, there are four types of created beings, classified according to the manner of birth: *Setaj,* or moisture-born; *Uttbhuj,* or seed-born; *Andaj,* or egg-born; and *Jeraj,* or womb-born. The Masters make frequent use of such concepts and doctrines from ancient Hindu lore, but they refer to them not necessarily in a spirit of scientific truth, but as divine poets, who employ allusion and mythology to drive the point home.

It becomes audible, however, when a spirit rises above body-consciousness. In Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred scriptures of the Sikhs, this Sound Principle is generally referred to as Naam down to Trikuti; and below Daswan Dwar, where the causal region extends, It is called the Trigun Bani, or Sound within the regions of the three gunas. It is also described as Brahm Janjalla, the network of Brahm, the God of creation. This Trigun Bani or Brahm Janjalla is still within the domain of Kal or Dissolution and hence must disintegrate. Kabir Sahib says:

> *Japa* (oral), *Ajapa* (soundless) and *Anhad* (the limitless Sound), all have an end,
> The Surat when absorbed in Shabd alone escapes.

Guru Amar Das says,

> The Bani that is within the three gunas is a great network of the Creator (Brahma);
> It keeps on talking, reasoning and thinking within the realm of *Kal*.[4]

The Sound Current beyond the reach of Kal is known as Sar Shabd, described as Sachi Bani or True Word, and It alone is the real Life Current or Life Chord capable of linking the spirit or soul with the Oversoul.

The Word of the Master is an elixir True,
O Nanak! through the Word, one can cross over.[5]

The True Word bursts asunder the three-fold egg,
O Nanak! It is the Saviour that saves all.[6]

GURU NANAK

He Himself draws in and absorbs, making the spirit neat and clean,
He is Truth, True is His Sound that effects the Union True.[7]

Wonderful indeed is the Bani that unites one with Truth,
Nanak, saturated in that wondrous wonder, has met the Lord;
One gets to it only through great good fortune.[8]

He alone meets God whom God so ordains,
And in him the True Bani manifests as Shabd,
O Nanak! then one ever sings of the virtues of the True One,
And so singing gets truly absorbed in them.[9]

The fearless Donor comes to reside in the mind,

And the True Bani descends in the heart of
a rare fortunate soul.[10]

The fortunate with a virtuous past, alone
meets a Master-soul,
And the Word of the Master makes the
True Bani manifest.[11]

The elixir of *Guru's Bani* is delectably
sweet,
A rare disciple of the Master may taste of
It.[12]

GURU AMAR DAS

The endless Bani may be manifested by a
Master.
He who listens to It is perpetually blessed,
And all comforts come unto him as a pure
gift.[13]

GURU ARJAN

Rare souls alone get absorbed in the Bani
through the grace of a Master,
The Bani of the Lord takes one to the
Eternal Home of the Father.[14]

GURU NANAK

True is the Shabd and True the Bani,
A devotee of the Master reaches It, and sings
of It in every age.[15]

GURU AMAR DAS

This does not mean that whatever the Saints utter by word of mouth has no value and is ineffectual. On the contrary, it means that of all the

Varan Atmak words and sounds, these occupy the highest place, for the flow of their words comes from out of the inexhaustible fund or reservoir at the back of all Fuqra-i-Kamil or Master-souls, and they speak of nothing but what they actually see and experience in the depth of their soul. Their words are worth tons of gold and emeralds for the seekers after Truth. They do not speak at the intellectual level, but their words well out of themselves and are charged with inner inspiration, and carry in them the weight of conviction.

> Whatever comes to me from the Father,
> That do I utter, O Lalo.[16]
>
> GURU NANAK

> When a Sadh opens his mouth,
> A veritable nectar-spring bursts forth.[17]
>
> GURU ARJAN

> The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and
> His Word was in my tongue.[18]
>
> KING DAVID

> Holy men of God spake as They were
> moved by the Holy Ghost.[19]
>
> ST. PETER

> Lowly Nanak speaks out only when he is
> bidden to do so.[20]
>
> GURU ARJAN

The writings of the saints are wonderful and valuable records of their spiritual experiences and

serve the pilgrims as guide-posts on the Path of spirituality.

Except the words of the Master, nothing is up to the mark,
All the writings and sayings are verily imperfect,
Imperfect is the speaker and imperfect will remain the listener, as the words come out of the imperfect.[21]

GURU AMAR DAS

O ye the disciples of the Master, sing the Naam eternally, for God Himself makes It manifest through a Godman,
Believe ye the words *(Bani)* of the Master as really true,
It is only God who speaks through the human pole.[22]
Blessed is the devotee of the Lord and blessed are the words (Bani) he utters for the good of mankind,
He who attends to His discourse in all sincerity, God Himself helps him through.[23]

GURU RAM DAS

The words (Bani) of the Sadh are ambrosial,
Whoever puts them into practice, reaches the goal and always speaks of the Word.[24]

GURU ARJAN

The words (Bani) of the devotee are divine,
He presents the Eternal Truth in varied forms,
Blessed is such a life, for not only does he attain salvation but many another through him.[25]

GURU RAM DAS

The writings and discourses of the Saints point out to us the True Bani, which is the very life of the creation, and grants Nirvana or salvation. It is the actual Truth, the Formless and Absolute, Sehaj Katha (the Perennial Language), Akath Katha (the Unspoken Language). It is the Voice of God, self-flowing Nectar, call it Naam or Shabd, Word, Amrit or Logos, Kalma or Bang-i-Illahi, or Sruti. It is the source and spirit of the creation; It is the very life and light, self-luminous, shadowless and eternally radiant.

The Word of the Master is a sweet Harmony (Bani)
And sings of Hari Naam day and night,
The True Lord abides in the core of the heart,
A heart like this is pure indeed.[26]

Bani or Shabd is verily the Great Truth,
O! love them with all your heart;
With the Word or Naam dwelling inside,
one is rid of anger and egotism.[27]

Shabd or Bani (Divine Music) is the Water
of Life (Amrit),
And comes to reside in one's soul when one
follows the instruction of the Master.[28]

Engage ye in the True Bani, the True Melody
and the True Sound,
To live always in Truth is fortunate indeed,
and blessed is the one who does so.[29]

GURU AMAR DAS

The *Jnana,* the meditation and the *Dhun Bani* (Inner Music) are all one and describe the Indescribable,
The Word (Shabd) speaks of the True One but the Word can be experienced through the Master.[30]

GURU NANAK

Take mercy on me and accept me as Thy
bondsman,
And snap all my bonds and take me out of
the net,
Let me live always in the sweet
remembrance of Thy Word (Naam) or
Thy Sound Principle (Bani),
Nanak Thy slave would gladly offer
himself as a sacrifice unto Thee.[31]

The untold tale of the Voice of God *(Prabh Bani)* is the true Water of Life (Amrit);
Nanak says: a truly wise man lives in communion with Him (Bani).[32]

How great His glory and life-giving His Bani (Sound Principle),
Let His Word (Naam) alone abide in my heart.[33]

Listen ye the blessed one, to the sweet Music of the *Amrit Bani* (life-giving Sound Principle),
He who is so destined, in his heart alone It becomes manifest.[34]

GURU ARJAN

In the Vedas, we have a wonderful account of It. Vak Devi (the Divine Voice or Word) says:

All *Devas* (gods) have their abode in me, and I look after each one of them. I am the efficient and the material cause of the very creation and I am sustaining the same. I am Knowledge and Enlightenment.[35]

RIG VEDA

Again,

I am the Creator of all regions and the demons, and I am all-pervading like the Pranas or vital airs in all forms and bodies. I occupy all space and girdle the Universe in the form of ether. In fullness I exist here, there and everywhere, beyond the earth and sky with hosts of solar systems; and by the power of my

inherent nature, they have assumed all forms and all colors.[36]

ATHARVA VEDA

This Vak Devi or Bani is characterized by Dhun or Harmony, for It is Sound Principle, the primal manifestation of the Formless God (Kutastha).

The unstruck self-existing Sound *(Anhat Bani)* pours forth symphonies from the wondrous throne of God,
The Melody of that Sound bewitches me, O Lord.[37]

Naam, Dhun or Bani is the manifestation of God,
So say the Smritis, the Shastras and the Vedas.[38]

GURU ARJAN

What is the signpost of the Abode of God?
There springs forth the perennial Harmony. [39]

BENI JI

It is an Eternal Sound Principle not bound by time and space.

Everything rests in and is sustained by Sound;
In the four divisions of time,
This Sound Principle was ever heard;
Emanating from Truth, It speaks of Truth.[40]

Sterling true is the Word (Sound Principle),
Godmen have manifested It in every age.[41]
GURU AMAR DAS

The True Sound (Bani) has been adored in all the four ages.
Everything is from that Truth and there is nothing besides Him.[42]

The True Sound (Bani) has in all the four ages been described as the Water of Life,
With great good fortune, one preordained is taken to and rests in the Word (Naam).[43]

I sing of the Lord, should the Lord be so pleased,
With the fragrant Word (Naam) and the Sound (Shabd) beating the core of my heart;
Gurbani (the Word of the Master) is heard reverberating on all sides,
Springing right from Truth, It ends in Truth.[44]

Gurbani is Naad, Vedas and still more, and
The mind when saturated in It gets fully absorbed, like Sarang in Water.[45]

The wondrous Bani is from the Formless One,
And nothing outshines the glorious Bani.

Its extent and Its depth surpass all
imagination,
For It is Truth Himself and naught else.[46]

GURU AMAR DAS

Now the question is, where is this Sound Principle which has been reverberating throughout the four Yugas (divisions of time), and how can It be found out? Guru Nanak tells us,

The True Bani (Sound) is reverberating in
the body,
Should the True One so ordain, one can
know himself,
It is with the knowledge of the Self that the
True One becomes known, and Truth
manifests Itself.[47]

GURU AMAR DAS

The sweet Nectar of Thy Voice (Bani)
Abides in the heart of Thy devotees.[48]

GURU NANAK

The tuneful trumpet of Thy doorway,
Sounds in the middle of my forehead.[49]

KABIR

It is all-pervading both within and without, for there is no place where It is not in Its fullness.

Thy Voice is both within and without,
Thou speakest and makest It manifest.[50]

The Word of the Master *(Gur-ki-Bani)*
resides in every heart,
He Himself manifests It and he does
hear It.
Whoever communes with It is freed from
bondage,
And goes to an Everlasting and Eternal
region.[51]

GURU AR.JAN

The Voice of God springs forth from the Light of God. True devotion, therefore, lies in the worship of the Sound Current, for It links man with God. Paltu Sahib says,

In the inverted well of the head there burns
a lamp,
The lamp burns, but without any wick or
oil.
Through six seasons and twelve months it
burns night and day,
But none may himself see the Light, except
with the Master's grace.
A Voice springs forth from within the
lamp's flame,
In the stillness of the soul, one may hear
the Voice,
O Paltu! blessed is the one that hears this
Voice,
For in the inverted well of the head, there
burns a lamp.

PALTU SAHIB

The disenchanted mind is freed from
illusions,
When it gets disciplined through
communion with Shabd;
From Heaven's Light within, there springs
forth Harmony,
Which keeps one absorbed in the True
One.[52]

GURU NANAK

The famous *Decalogue* or Ten Commandments that constitute the core of Mosaic Law was delivered to Moses in the midst of thunder and flame. The very creation lives by the Power of Naam or the Light and Sound of God.

Oh! the one life within us and abroad,
Which meets all motions and becomes its
soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in
light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every-
where.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Saints tell us that the Sound Current is reverberating within Sukhman, the central channel between Ida and Pingla, the two side nerves in the middle of the forehead.

The True Voice of the Master adept,
Is heard in the Sukhman with mind at rest.[53]

GURU AMAR DAS

It resides in each one of us, but only a Saint or a Master-soul can make It manifest to us:

Wonderful is the Voice of the perfect Master,
Manifested by the Master, It merges one in Truth.[54]

By Practice of the True Word *(Sachi Bani),* one is rid of all pains, sorrows and afflictions,
The devotees are ever in bliss through the favor of the perfect Master.[55]

GURU AMAR DAS

Through the instructions of the Master, the Bani is made manifest within,
The True Word (Sachi Bani) sings the glory of God.[56]

GURU NANAK

Ambrosial is the Bani of the perfect Master,
In His mercy, He may make It manifest within,
No more doth one remain in the gyres,
But gets eternal peace and rest.[57]

GURU AR.JAN

When one gets It, he knows of It,
Without true Jnana, one knows naught,
Master's gift ever abides in the heart,
Bani then remains eternally manifested. [58]

The Voice of God (Bani) arises from and
leads back unto Him,
His untold tale can be listened to in the
Word made manifest by the Master.[59]

GURU AMAR DAS

One can know of the Voice of God through the grace of a perfect Master. It comes as a pure gift from the Master, and we cannot have It by any other means. Truly speaking, Guru is Word Personified, and each revels in abundance in the other. Guru Arjan addressed his Guru, "Glorious art Thou with Thy melodious Harmony."

The Word is the Master and the Master
the Word (Bani) personified.
In the Word lies the Pool of Nectar
(Amritsar);
The devotee of the Master practices the
Word,
And the living Master rescues him.[60]

GURU RAM DAS

The above is clearly borne out by Bhai Gurdas when he says,

The Vedas and the scriptures are but handy
aids to the Master,
The Way to true salvation lies in His
hands; and

Unless the Guru appears, one cannot see God.[61]

BHAI GURDAS

In Guru Granth Sahib, It is spoken of as *Gupti Bani* or the Hidden Voice, the *Anhad Bani* or the Limitless Voice, the *Aghur Bani* or the unspoken (unmanifest) Word.

The Hidden Voice becomes manifest.
O Nanak! only the True One knows of lt.[62]

GURU NANAK

Limitless is the treasure of Sound,
Godman holds the key to the Sound.[63]

GURU ARJAN

With a true love for the Lord,
The unmanifest Word becomes manifest.[64]

GURU NANAK

Bani: Its merits

1. It grants eternal peace and repose leading to salvation.

O Lord! Thy Word (Bani) is ambrosia or the Water of Life,
And by attuning to It, I am wafted Heavenward.[65]

GURU AR.JAN

2. It destroys the canker of egotism or I-ness.

A touch with the Unending Sound
(Anhad Bani) destroys all I-ness,
Let me scrupulously obey my Master
and be a sacrifice unto Him.[66]

The Virtuous Word *(Nirmal Bani)* ever
resides with the Formless One
(Nij Ghar),
O Nanak! It destroys all thoughts of
I-ness, and rids one of all illusion.[67]

GURU AMAR DAS

3. It helps in acquiring self-knowledge and takes one beyond the Trigunatmic regions.

By losing oneself (in the Bani) one
becomes all-knowing,
By attuning with the Word (Bani), one
gets absorbed in Truth.[68]

GURU NANAK

By devotion to the Master, one
experiences the three worlds.
He becomes the knower of the Self
and merges in the Lord.[69]

GURU AMAR DAS

4. It washes off all sin and sorrow.

Pure is Bani and pure the Shabd,
And pure light resides in all.

The pure Bani sings of the glory of God,
And the practice of It washes off all sins.[70]

GURU AMAR DAS

5. It vanquishes the deadly sins.

Oh! I have vanquished the deadly sins,
How delectably sweet is the Savior Word (Bani)!
Nanak says: the mind gets enlightened,
And one reaches the region of Pure Silence (Bliss).[71]

GURU ARJAN

6. It helps in all possible ways, sets everything in order and grants bliss to body and mind.

By listening to the Voice of the All-pervading God (*Bani Ram Naam*),
One's endeavors are crowned with success,
From the very pores of the Master's devotees spring forth the Melodies of the Divine Harmony.[72]

GURU RAM DAS

Without the aid of Bani, one remains in ignorance and wanders in the wilderness of life, ever a prey to fears and mental distress.

He does not know the Shabd nor apprehend the Bani,
A slave to the mind and the senses, he remains in affliction and sorrow.[73]

GURU AMAR DAS

This is why in the *Guru Granth Sahib* great stress is laid on practice of the Bani.

> Come ye the beloved disciples of the Master,
> sing the True Bani,
> Sing the Bani of the Master, a Bani which is
> the crest jewel of all sounds.[74]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

The Bani springs into being under the Command (Hukam) of the Most High and one can listen to the same under His Will.

> Only if Thou will it, can I sing the Bani,
> Only if Thou will it, can I express the Truth.[75]
>
> GURU ARJAN

Gurbani

Gurbani is not something separate from Bani. In fact, the two terms are synonyms. Since Bani is made manifest by the Guru, it is very often spoken of as Gurbani.

Gurbani is Heaven's Light for the entire world and serves as a beacon or lighthouse to the people in distress.

> In the stormy sea of life, Gurbani (Master's
> Word) is a powerful Lighthouse,
> But one is guided by this Light only if so
> ordained.[76]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

A contact with the Master's Word (Gurbani) purifies the mind and body of all impurities, mental and physical, and leads to the union of the little self with the Overself. Whoever practices the Word is saved from the clutches of death and regains the Kingdom of God.

> In the treasurehouse of devotional practices, Gurbani is a peerless gem,
> By listening, singing and practicing (Gurbani), one lives in a state of perpetual bliss.[77]
>
> GURU ARJAN

Gurbani is Naad, the Anhad Dhun or the Sound Principle.

> Only if it please Thee, my Lord, may I sing of Thy glory,
> And within me shall dwell Thy Word, the fragrant Naam,
> And the reverberations of the Gurbani (Shabd) be heard in the four corners of the Universe,
> And thus all be absorbed in the True Naam.[78]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

> Gurbani is Naad, Vedas and still more,
> Mind absorbed in It gets full satiation.[79]
>
> GURU NANAK

O ye the beloved of the Lord, learn to know
the Word of the Master (Satgur Bani),
Evanescent as the fleeting clouds are both
the blooming youth and the aging body,
Death may come like a thief in the night;
engage ye in the Inner Music of the
Soul.[80]

GURU NANAK

BOOK SIX

Guru-Mantra

The Master's Word

Guru-Mantra

IN THE SIKH Scriptures we often come across terms like Gurbani, Bani, Shabd or Naam, all of which are synonyms. The Masters of the Highest Order are always concerned with Naam or Shabd, and they initiate seekers after Truth into Its significance, for It puts them on the Path Godward. Christ calls It Word or Logos, Holy Spirit or the Comforter, through which we rediscover God in man and attain salvation.

> Listen ye, O friend! the devotee of the Lord
> Has given me the Word "Truth" as *Guru-Mantra.*[1]

> The Master has given me the Mantra of
> Hari Naam,
> With this boon all my desires are fulfilled.[2]
>
> GURU ARJAN

This Mantra of the Guru one may get by great good fortune.

> The Word of the Master becomes manifest,
> O Nanak! if it is so ordained by God.[3]
>
> GURU ARJAN

This Word or Naam is characterized by Light and Sound. In fact, through the grace of the Master,

It manifests Itself in each individual in the form of Heaven's Light, the Shadowless Light, Light that never is on sea or land, self-luminous and radiant Light that shines in darkness, Light that is more lustrous than that of thousands of suns put together. It is Heaven's Sovereign Light.

> In utter darkness, the Master's Word
> (Guru-Mantra) shines forth into Light,
> In the company of the Master, all are
> rescued and saved.[4]
>
> GURU ARJAN

> I am the Light of the world; He that
> followeth Me, shall not walk in
> darkness, but shall have the Light of
> Life.[5]
>
> CHRIST

> That ye should shew forth the praises
> of him who hath called you out of
> darkness into his marvelous light.[6]
>
> ST. PETER

The seat of Naam or Word is in the deepest recesses of the human soul.

> The precious crest jewel of Naam (the Word
> of God) is implanted by the devotee of
> the Lord in the heart of man.[7]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

> Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own.[8]
>
> ST. PAUL

The manifestation of Naam or Word is possible only through the grace of the living Master, for It is simply his gift and comes from him; It cannot be earned.

> The Master has given me the perfect Word or Mantra.[9]
>
> GURU ARJAN

> By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: It is the gift of God.[10]
>
> ST. PAUL

> We are all as unclean things, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.[11]
>
> ISAIAH

> For the grace of God bringeth salvation.[12]

> Neither is their salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we shall be saved.[13]
>
> ST. PETER

It is not possible to describe in words the greatness of the Master's Word (Guru-Mantra) or the Holy Spirit. It affords a key to the Kingdom of God. From man-making, It gradually leads to

becoming God. Man regains the Lost Paradise. As he comes to his own, he understands the true values of life, the essential unity of his own soul with the Oversoul (pervading everywhere and permeating in all) and culminating in the union of the two. He is now no longer a separate entity but a conscious co-worker in the Divine Plan, sharing in His glory and greatness.

> He is a man of all virtues and honored among all,
> To whomsoever the Master gives the Mantra of the Word.[14]
>
> GURU ARJAN

Jesus Christ describes the work of the Holy Spirit in this way:

> . . . I will send him (the Comforter) unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: . . . when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth . . . .[15]
>
> CHRIST

The Word of the Master is purely a gift of the Master. It can neither be earned nor learned. It comes when it comes and works by grace alone. Spiritual insight can neither be taught nor bought, but it may be caught like an infection from one infected with it. As light comes from light, so does life from life; and truly blessed is one who gets it.

God can be worshiped in the company of
a *Sadh* (disciplined soul or saint),
The Guru just gives the Mantra of the Word
which he makes manifest.[16]

GURU ARJAN

Guru-Mantra has a great and powerful saving grace in It. At death, It comes forth in the Radiant Form of the Master to lead the spirit back to the mansion of the Lord, and the spirit thus escorted passes unhindered from plane to plane and is honorably received everywhere. In life's sojourn on this earth also, one passes his days far above the turmoil of life.

Take ye the lesson in the Word (Mantra)
from a Master and practice the same,
Those who love the Lord are ultimately
saved at the time of death,
O Nanak! Those who practice the Word
(Mantra) of the Master, day and night,
They shall certainly be saved.[17]

GURU RAM DAS

With the Word of the Master (Guru-
Mantra) in the heart, one becomes
fearless and can have no sorrow or
affliction,
None without the aid of a Master has ever
been able to cross over the stormy sea of
life with all his wits about him.[18]

GURU ARJAN

Whosoever receives the Word of the Lord
(Hari Mantra) from a Master,
He escapes unscathed from the hell-fires of
the world.[19]

GURU ARJAN

Four things remain eternally true: *Naam*,
Sadhu, Guru and *Gobind;*
Nanak says: a rare soul in this world prac-
tices the Word of the Master (Guru-
Mantra).[20]

GURU TEG BAHADUR

What is the life of one without contact with
the Word,
Nothing better than that of a dog or a
swine, an ass or a snake.[21]

GURU ARJAN

BOOK SEVEN

Vakhar

A True Deal in True Wares

Vakhar

IN THE scriptures it is stated that the purpose of the human birth is to gather the merchandise of "Vakhar," the wares of Naam or the Word; for It unlocks the Kingdom of God and makes one accepted at and honored in His Court. "Vakhar," then, consists of the practice of and communion with the Holy Word.

> The Master makes with thee the true deal,
> He who gathers in the True Wares *(Sacha Vakhar),* he revels in the True Word.[1]
>
> GURU NANAK

> Serve One, collect One, ask for and pray God for One thing,
> Gather ye the riches of Naam *(Vakhar Dhan),* O Nanak, that is the true capital.[2]
>
> GURU ARJAN

> We trade in the True Word (Sacha Vakhar),
> O Nanak! a devotee of the Master gets through.[3]
>
> GURU NANAK

Vakhar, or the merchandise of Naam, is in abundance with the Saints and one can have It from them alone.

The Vakhar (stock in trade) for which ye
have come into the world
Is the all-pervading Word (Ram Naam),
which ye can get from Saints.[4]
The pilgrim soul has been able to contact
the Master,
The stock in trade (Vakhar) that ye desireth,
ye can have through communion with
the Word.[5]

GURU ARJAN

Just as we have emporiums and centers for collecting and distributing commercial goods, in the same way we have in the human body a center where Vakhar can be gathered in, collected, and distributed. It has, of course, to be mined out of the recesses of the soul with the help and guidance of the Master.

This body is the merchant's storehouse and
has in it the precious Vakhar as wares,
A rare buyer may get It through following
the instructions of the Master.[6]

GURU ARJAN

BOOK EIGHT

Deeksha

Initiation

Deeksha

IN ALMOST all the scriptural lore we come across, in one form or another, a term that stands for "initiation"; i.e., introduction of a person into the principles of the inner science. The Muslims generally use the word "baet" for initiation, while others call it "deeksha." Among the Christians, the admission to the church is known as "baptism." The Hindus call it "duojanma" or the second birth.

This initiation or introduction into the tenets of a new science is not something formal or by word of mouth only. Its significance is far deeper than is generally understood. It is tantamount to adopting an individual into the very life and spirit of the tenets that are introduced to him in theory. It is conveying a Life-impulse to the initiate and giving him first-hand experience of the source of life. It thus has a two-fold aspect: theoretical as well as practical.

At the time of the initiation, the Master explains to the individuals concerned, the theory of the spiritual science or Para Vidya (the Knowledge of the Beyond). It is an admitted fact that theory precedes practice, for a correct understanding of the subject is of paramount importance before one can put the theory into practice. A success-

ful application and experimentation with verifiable results cannot be carried on without a correct knowledge and understanding of the subject.

As spirituality is the science of the spirit or soul — a Living Principle, the very Breath of Life — an adept in spirituality must impart to every initiate a particle of his own Life-impulse (called "Jia Dan") before the initiate can understand what the "life of the spirit" is, as distinguished from the "life of the flesh" that he has been leading hitherto; for it is the spirit or soul alone that can apprehend and experience the Oversoul, when freed from the trammels of the flesh, the mind, the pranas or vital airs, and all the outgoing faculties, all of which constitute the outer man as engaged in the world and worldly pursuits on the sensual plane.

> By imparting his own Life-impulse, he instills true devotion in a person and unites him with the Lord.[1]
>
> GURU ARJAN

Who is competent to initiate?

The initiation into the esoteric science of the soul can successfully and rightly be granted by some perfect Saint or Master — an adept in the art and science of Para Vidya or the Knowledge of the Beyond. One who has not himself extricated

and freed his spirit from body bondage and transcended into higher spiritual regions, and who has not seen Reality face to face, and who has not, by spiritual practice, become established in Truth, cannot possibly do anything in this behalf. A Saint of the highest order alone is competent to reveal the Path and lead Godward, regardless of what we call him: Sant Satguru, Murshid-i-Kamil, Prophet, Messiah or Master-soul. As light comes from light, so does life from life. The scriptural lore, by itself, is unable to impart this life-impulse.

> Meet a Satguru and take his initiation,
> Surrender thine all and peep within.[2]
>
> GURU NANAK

> Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.[3]

> . . . ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light . . .[4]
>
> ST. PETER

> For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.[5]
>
> ST. PAUL

The instruction in the esoteric teachings consists of the exposition of Simran, Dhyan and Bhajan, that is to say, repetition (mental with tongue of thought only) of the words which are charged with the power of the Master; concentration or meditation (fixing consciousness or gaze) at the center of the two eyebrows; and linking the spirit with the saving lifeline within, ever reverberating in the form of the perennial Sound Current, the very life-breath of the Universe, of which the Master himself is the living embodiment. As soon as a devotee is able to transcend the physical body, the Radiant Form of the Master (Guru Dev) appears in the subtle plane and becomes a guiding force to the spirit on the journey into higher spiritual realms, bringing him back to the True Home of his Father. Henceforth the Master-spirit never leaves the soul, but continuously helps and directs, visibly and invisibly, directly and indirectly, in this life and the life hereafter, as the occasion may demand.

Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.[6]
And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.[7]

CHRIST

Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,
In thy most need to go by thy side.

EVERYMAN

No man, however learned he may be, however high his morals be pitched, can by his own unaided efforts rise above body-consciousness. The experience of the spirit withdrawal while living can be vouchsafed only by a Master Saint and by no one else, and without this transcendence one cannot peep into the world beyond and take hold of the Sound Principle — the Divine Chord in man, the link between the Creator and His creation.

> It is the Divine Law that none can conceive of Him without a Satguru.[8]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

> No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.[9]
>
> Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.[10]
>
> CHRIST

Initiation from a Master-soul is of paramount importance, for herein lies the secret of all esoteric teachings and esoteric experience. It means a new birth and a new life, entirely in a new setting. This spiritual birth or birth in the Master is called a second birth, and enables a person to turn over a new leaf, to say goodbye to the past and march forward to his original Home, the long-forgotten paradise — New Jerusalem, the Holy City, Muqam-i-Haq or Sach Khand.

> Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.[11]

> Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.[12]
>
> CHRIST

The Kingdom of God: Where it is

The Kingdom of God is at present a lost dominion for us. Ever since the fall of man, for his first disobedience to God's commandment, we stand ostracized from the Garden of Eden and have no access to it. Under the overbearing pressure of the world and worldly pursuits, we have become entirely extroverted and have no thought of God and His Kingdom within.

> The kingdom of God cometh not with observation;
> Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.[13]
>
> CHRIST

The priceless Waters of Immortality lie buried and lost within the depths of the human soul. The call of the Master is:

He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.[14]

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.[15]

CHRIST

All this leads to the one inevitable conclusion of death in life, for without it one cannot rise into Universal Consciousness or cosmic awareness. This higher life of the spirit depends entirely on the grace of a living Master, capable of imparting his life impulse and granting the saving lifeline within.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.[16]

ST. PAUL

With initiation and spiritual sadhna or practice, one gradually becomes aware of his shortcomings and tries to weed them out; and the more he purifies himself, the more he grows into Divine Life. As the scales begin to drop off, the true values of life become more and more apparent. The spirit gradually gets freed from the shackles of the world and is enabled to transcend the physical body and make flights into the higher regions. Hereafter, "he walks not after the flesh but after

the spirit." [17] Living in the world, he is no longer of the world. He now delights in the bliss of higher spiritual regions and not in the pleasures of the senses and sense-objects. The gift of Naam or Word comes only from a Master-soul who, by injecting his own life-impulse, befits an initiate for the spiritual journey.

The measure and speed of advance, however, depends on the individual's own make-up, the ground on which he stands, and the preparation that he may have made in past incarnations. As each one has a different background, each one has his own starting point. The seed is sown, but its unfoldment, growth and development depends on the nature of the soil in which it is planted.

The Master injects his own consciousness, Light and Sound, into each initiate. Once the contact with the Divine Link is established and the spiritual experience gained, however little it may be to begin with, at the lowest level, it can, by regular day-to-day practice, be developed to any length one likes until it becomes quite natural and normal, a matter of voluntary withdrawal of spirit currents as and when one likes.

> The devotee of the Master comes and goes at his will and pleasure, with no let or hindrance.[18]

Each one, however, as said before, takes his or her own time for efflorescence and fructification. The dormant spiritual faculties begin to quicken with life and the initiate feels within him a sort of fullness, a satiety, a blessedness. This is a gift imperishable and indestructible. It can neither be stolen nor washed away. The seed of spirituality, once sown in the innermost depths of the soul, must bear flowers and fruits in the fullness of time. No power on earth can stand in the way of its growth or stifle it in any way whatever.

He who has once been initiated by a competent Master is assured, once and for all, his liberation from the bondage of mind and matter; it is but a question of time. The seed of spirituality sown in him is bound to sprout and fructify. The spirituality when awakened and the spiritual experience gained must develop, and the Master Power cannot rest contented until the child owned is reared and taken home to the house of the Father.

The true knowledge dawns only with initiation, for without initiation from a Master-soul, one can have no knowledge.

> There can be no *jnana* (true knowledge) without meeting a Master-soul, nor meditation without a first-hand experience.[19]
>
> GURU ARJAN

But one who is fortunate may have the experience of both, through the grace of a Master Saint. It means taking in a particle of Life's Living Principle through some Godman or polarized God; i.e., a pole from where the Power of God works in this world. In the light of this knowledge, the mind gradually loosens its tentacles, which are holding the soul in hoops of steel; so that the spirit is able to free itself from the mind, and know and perceive her own true nature.

O Nanak! Without knowing oneself by
self-analysis, one wanders ever in the
wilderness of delusion.[20]

GURU TEG BAHADUR

The whole world is in the throes of
attachment and infatuation,
A rare devotee of the Master escapes from
the mighty maze of mind and matter,
This infatuation keeps in perpetual motion
the wheel of life,
And it takes one time and again into the
grip of *Kal*.[21]

GURU NANAK

The process of liberating a human soul from the labyrinth of the sensual plane lies in the hands of a competent Master of Para Vidya or the Science of the Beyond; competent both in theory and practice. One who has himself liberated his soul and can at will go to the higher spiritual regions,

can take others as well. It is a work of great trust and responsibility which the so-called Masters, with which the world always abounds, cannot do. Those who prescribe outer yogic practices or the performance of rites and rituals, sacrifices and austerities, pilgrimages and the like, are yet ignorant of the Inner Path that begins from the headquarters of the soul above the sensory plane, and for which transcendence above body consciousness is the primary condition. It is there that one has "to knock," as Christ put it, and he guaranteed that "it shall be opened."[22] The philosopher Emerson calls it "tapping inside." In Ramkali War, Mohalla 5, of the Guru Granth Sahib, we have a pen picture of the Masters of Apara Vidya or empirical knowledge of the world:

He, while working for religious merit,
takes upon himself a load of sins,
And goes begging from door to door by
offering initiation,
He himself has no faith in the Vedas and
other scriptures,
And wants all worship and adoration unto
himself.
Being a *kazi,* he sits in judgment over
others;
While telling the beads, he ventures to
expound God-head;
With bribes, he tramples on the rights of
others;

To the questions, he offers quotations from
the scriptures.
GURU ARJAN

We live in the tumultuous sea of life without any moorings and are carried along by the fearful currents of attachments and infatuations. A rare devotee of the Master may be able to successfully face the storm and stress and cross over to a haven of safety, but the rest float down helplessly. If even after initiation an initiate takes recourse to disciplines and practices other than those enjoined by the Master, he cannot rid himself of worldly ties and takes a longer time to reach his Native Home.

All are drowned in the love of the world,
A rare devotee of the Master may ferry
across.
Because of attachments, one comes over
time and again,
Trapped in infatuation, one cannot but
abide in the realm of death.
Even after initiation from the Master,
people engage in rites and rituals,
Neither can they snap the bonds nor reach
the goal,
It is His glance of grace that can pull down
the mighty maze,
And then, O Nanak! One may get absorbed
in Him.[23]
GURU NANAK

The true initiation is nothing but an introduction to Naam and a contact with the live creative Principle of Sound, which can be listened to, experienced, and practiced from day to day.

Only the predestined get in touch with a Master-soul,
With the Water of Life *(Hari Ka Naam)* he grants the true initiation (*deeksha)*.[24]

GURU NANAK

Live ye in the haven of a Sadh,
And leave all thy wisdom and knowledge,
Let the Master's Instructions (*Guru Deeksha)* abide in thy heart,
This, O Nanak! may happen through the Writ of the Lord.[25]

GURU ARJAN

BOOK NINE

Gyan or Jnana

Knowledge-Enlightenment

Gyan or Jnana

THE TERM "Gyan" or "Jnana" is derived from the Sanskrit root "gna," which is equivalent to the English word "know." In common speech, Gyan or knowledge is taken to mean thinking at the intellectual level, embracing within its fold all knowledge recorded in and derived from books, ancient or modern, spiritual or secular. No doubt this is a kind of Gyan or knowledge; and while it is an elementary kind, it is very extensive, varied and significant as far as it goes. We have need of it. A part of it, called scriptures, includes the theory of the science of spirituality. All scriptures — the Vedas and Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Smritis, Shastras, Puranas, and the Six Schools of Philosophy; the great epic poems, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata; the Holy Bible, the Holy Koran, the Adi Granth Sahib, and all others — form part of this branch of knowledge and come within the range of Apara Vidya, or the knowledge that comes through the senses. They form a wonderful record of the spiritual experiences of the rishis, prophets and saints of old, and inspire in us a longing to have similar experiences of our own. They also contain ethical truths of great value, which pave the way for an ethical life; and if followed scrupulously, they lay a solid foundation for a spiritual superstruc-

ture. So far, so good. But beyond this they are of no avail.

Apart from the Apara Vidya, or Gyan at the level of thinking and writing, there is a subtler and higher type of knowledge which is gained at the supra-mental level. It is independent of the knowledge gained through the ordinary senses as it is intuitive and a direct experience of the soul. Hence it is called Para Vidya, or the Knowledge of the Beyond. In all religions, it is spoken of as the real Gyan, or true knowledge. It is gained by the spirit or soul when it reflects back upon itself. It is an outcome of self-analysis by a regular process of inversion or looking within. It is a thing of actual experience and realization within one's own self, and gradually leads to self-knowledge and God-knowledge.

When the light of self-knowledge dawns, all doubts and all differences vanish; one views the world in an altogether different setting, like a person standing on the summit of a hill, looking at the landscape around and below him stretching out in an endless undulating series. He finds himself looking on the great panorama of life in its variegated forms — a center, a hub of the creation itself. The past, the present and the future unroll themselves before him like an open book, and there is nothing that he does not know, nor does he feel the want of knowledge in himself. Now

dawns upon him the answer to the great question — "What is that, the knowledge of which makes everything known?" — that has been asked by man since the world began. True Gyan or knowledge, then, lies in knowing and experiencing the Ultimate Reality, in the Light and Life of which we blindly live, move about, and have our very being rooted, and yet know it not. It is a great irony of fate, that we know so much about the world and worldly surroundings as to have a surfeit of them, but next to nothing of the vital motor-power called the soul — the Living Spirit, the life spark of consciousness that enlivens us and is our very life — our real self.

So there is a vast difference between Apara and Para Vidya. The former keeps on expanding as we proceed, but with no way out. The poet Tennyson describes it aptly:

> Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
> Gleams that untraveled world, whose
> margin fades
> Forever and forever when I move.

It is a kind of wilderness through which there is no way out. Even a person with all his wits about him is sure to be lost in its labyrinthine maze. Like a flogging horse, he may kill himself with sheer exhaustion, but cannot possibly get through. Such is the terrible path on which we trudge.

On the other hand, Para Vidya has boundless possibilities, unfolding new realms of celestial splendor as the pilgrim soul proceeds on the Path. It is a very pleasant journey, for the wayfarer has with him a sure companion, an unerring guide who knows the Path and its dangerous turns and twists. He takes him along in safety, shows him especially beautiful scenes and makes him acquainted with everything on the way. His companion has a radiantly smiling face and a divine dignity, and imparts to him directly that first-hand knowledge of the Beyond of which the pilgrim may have read in books. With all its traps, turns and slips, the Path moves through a belvedere of uncommon splendor and affords a sure way out to a haven of rest and repose. The journey's end is nothing but the Kingdom of God where peace and quiet reign, the New Jerusalem or Holy City. Thus real Gyan or knowledge deals with Realized Truth.

In the Bhagavad Gita, we come across two terms: *Gyan* and *Vigyan*. The knowledge of that One live principle, called Paramatma or God, actively operating in all living creatures that appear and disappear like so many bubbles, is called Gyan; and the realization that the said live principle is the material and efficient cause of all that exists is known as Vigyan. A person possessed of Gyan or Vigyan then actually sees nothing but God in His creation and creation

as established in God; that is to say, the two as identical and not separate from each other — God in man and man in God — which is akin to the pantheistic view of religion (identification of God with the Universe).

The Gurbani or the scriptures of the Gurus (the Granth Sahib) have nowhere identified book-learning with Gyan. On the contrary, the term Gyan is used to indicate the Sound Principle (as is evident from the terms employed: Shabd, Naam, Sach, Kirtan, Dhuni, etc.) which is continually reverberating in fullness in each individual.

> The Word of the Master is ever sweet,
> It is the true knowledge and true meditation,
> Rare is the soul that may taste Its sweetness,
> For the grace of the Master makes It sweet.[1]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

> Know ye the true knowledge and meditation to be the *Dhuni* (Sound) Divine,
> Blessed is the ever-green tree with the immense shade.[2]
>
> GURU NANAK

We have need, great need, for knowledge on the intellectual level, and that we get from scriptures and discourses of Masters. We cannot practice spirituality unless we first know its theory: what it is, its technique, how it can be practiced, obsta-

cles in the way and how to overcome them, etc. We cannot, therefore, ignore the theory aspect of Para Vidya, for theory always precedes practice in every branch of knowledge. But after having learned the theory, we must put the theoretical knowledge into practice so as to make it our very own.

Theory by itself cannot satisfy the innate craving of the spirit which must be fed on manna or the heavenly food — the Bread of Life — to satiate her hunger and supplied with the Water of Life to quench her thirst. Theory and practice, therefore, go cheek by jowl and are interdependent. But to achieve the goal, one has to work for it and this requires stilling the mind and intellect before anything else. After full comprehension of the theory, nothing remains but to gain practical experience of it at the level of the spirit, far above the level of the senses and sense organs. We have thus to separate the two by a process of self-analysis or transcension of the body consciousness, a practical demonstration of which the Master gives in the laboratory of the body at the time of initiation.

> *Jnana* or true knowledge with the Master is the Word and it comes through practice of the Word,

He alone achieves it who accepts and
follows the instructions of the Master,
with all his heart and soul.[3]

GURU RAM DAS

Jnana and meditation on *Sach* (Truth) have
a very deep meaning;
No one knows of their inmost secret and
greatness.[4]

Jnana, meditation, the Divine Song *(Dhuni)*
and the Sound *(Bani)* are all one,
All, all repeat the same ancient story of the
wondrous and the speechless One.[5]

Practice Jnana, meditation and Harmony
by absorption in the Sound (Shabd),
Be ye one with Him Who is beyond all
limitations, peerless and without fear.[6]

GURU NANAK

If you wish for a dip in the sacred pool of
Naam, that pool is verily within you;
A true pilgrimage for the soul is Shabd
which is replete with Gyan.[7]

GURU ARJAN

The Master has applied to my eyes the
collyrium of Gyan,
The light became effulgent within and the
darkness vanished.[8]

GURU AMAR DAS

Jnana with the Master is Naam and he
makes one steady in it,
One who is destined, gets it by devotion to
the lotus feet of the Master.[9]

GURU RAM DAS

With the manifestation of Light one
becomes enlightened,
The Light of Jnana has now been implanted
in me by the Master;
By drinking the ambrosia of the Word
(Naam), the mind is fully at rest and
devoid of fear.[10]

GURU ARJAN

With the dawn of Jnana, there is light on
every side,
In His boundless grace, He has accepted a
filthy worm like me.[11]

RAVIDAS

This knowledge then is self-luminous. When it comes, there dawns an everlasting Light in the initiate's soul. From then on, he walks always in God's kindly Light which accompanies him wherever he may be. This is true devotion and grants one full protection from all harm.

The scriptures tell us that Jnana is characterized by the Light Principle. Guru Amar Das, speaking of Jnana as taught by the Masters, describes it as "Eternal Light within," which serves

as an altar for ceaseless devotion and grants one the full fruit of Naam:

The Master's Jnana brings forth eternal
Light within,
It keeps one absorbed in ceaseless devotion:
the greatest gift of the all-pervading
Word.[12]

The devotee of the Master knows the
Sound (Shabd),
And rests in the ambrosia of His Word
(Naam).
The Master's Jnana is refulgent high,
And it drives away the darkness of
ignorance.[13]

GURU AMAR DAS

The company of a Sadh is the company of
Truth and the congregation sings His
glory,
The scintillating Jnana sheds luster
within, dispelling all darkness born of
ignorance.[14]

With the practice of Naam (Word), one is
rid of all sorrow and pain, for It brings
in supreme bliss,
The Jnana of the Master is all ablaze, filling
one with Light to the deepest depths of
the soul.[15]

Those with a writ of the Lord in their
forehead do meet a Master Saint,
And have all their doubt and distrust
driven out by the blaze of Jnana.[16]

GURU RAM DAS

Guru Arjan also tells us that with the dawn of Master's Jnana within, comes the advent of Heaven's Light both within and without, enveloping all; and the mind gets satiated and is freed from all illusions and delusions. One is thus led to the inexhaustible Fount of the Waters of Immortality, drinking which he becomes desireless, and losing all fear of death gains Life Everlasting.

With Heaven's Light, all things get truly
lighted as a result of the Jnana from the
Master;
By drinking the Water of Life, the mind
grows still and becomes fearless.[17]

GURU ARJAN

In scaling the spiritual heights, the pilgrim has actually to pass through the light of the stars, the moon and the sun. This Knowledge or Enlightenment comes only when the spirit takes its course in the Sukhman or Shahrag, a central narrow channel between the two eyebrows.

To hail the light of the moon and the sun within, as the soul rises into the astral world, is de-

scribed by the scriptures as the Path of Jnana or True Knowledge.

> In spite of fire in the core, how charmingly
> fragrant is the vegetation,
> And so with the boisterous waters of the
> great seas when confined within their
> bounds,
> The real sun and the real moon are both
> within the human body,
> And yet one rarely gets to know true
> Jnana, the very soul of all that exists.[18]
>
> GURU NANAK

Guru Nanak, in Jap Ji, Stanzas 35 and 36, while telling us at length of the Realm of Divine Knowledge (Gyan Khand) with countless gods, goddesses, and deities, beautifully sums up the description:

> Divine knowledge illumines in the realm
> of knowledge,
> While divine symphonies play unending
> music, and joy and bliss reign supreme.

Heaven's Light always serves as an unfailing friend in moments of dire distress, both without and within; and one walks steadily in it, in life and after. In Sukhmani, Guru Arjan has devoted a full ashtpadi, a hymn in octave or eight stanzas, to this Light and the way it guides and leads the soul when it quits the body. This Light is there

in the Sukhman, but one cannot get access to it without the help of a Master:

The Light of Jnana is a powerful aid both within and without,
Commune with It, O mind! as It destroys all affliction and sorrow.[19]

GURU ARJAN

The Light of Master's Jnana is a peerless jewel that grants salvation,
O Nanak! he may give It to whomever He wishes to grant the honor of His Court.[20]

GURU AMAR DAS

The Light of Jnana has been manifested within,
I have easily won the gift of the Word.[21]

GURU ARJAN

Make a vintage of Jnana, and ferment it with meditation on the fire of His love and reverence,
The Sukhman is bubbling over with the Water of Life, drink ye to thy fill.[22]

KABIR

The Master is knowledge personified; and this knowledge he imparts to a rare gurmukh, i.e., one who completely surrenders himself to the guru. A Satguru can manifest this Light which is capable of granting Nirvana. It is an inner science and one has to work for it under the guidance of

a perfect Master; no one has ever got it without him.

Ask of Brahma, Narad, Ved Vyas, and others,
All testify none can have it without a Master.[23]

Water stands in a pitcher; a pitcher without water is of no consequence,
The mind is wedded to Jnana (knowledge), but True Jnana (Flaming Sound) never comes without a Master Saint.[24]

GURU NANAK

O Mother! One cannot get the Light of Jnana without a Guru,
One may try all means; he cannot get to the Lord.[25]

GURU ARJAN

Without the Master, one cannot contact the Word nor find the Path,
The Light of Jnana is the true essence, for It leads Godward.[26]

Without the Master, one cannot have the Light of Jnana or inner peace,
O Nanak! Without the Word, the worldly-wise forfeit the human birth.[27]

GURU AMAR DAS

I offer myself as a sacrifice to my Master, who has united me with the Lord,

He has applied to my eyes the collyrium of
Jnana by His Word,
And with these eyes, I now see the world
in its true colors.[28]

GURU NANAK

The Master alone can give the collyrium of
Jnana
That shows the all-pervading Power of
God.[29]

GURU AMAR DAS

The Master has given me the collyrium of
Jnana that has dispelled all darkness,
With the grace of God a Saint is met,
O Nanak! One witnesses the Light within.[30]

The Light of True Knowledge is the
greatest gift of a Master-soul,
The Master has given me the greatest
gift of Jnana by creating in me a craving
for the Word (Naam),
He has linked me with Truth (the Power of
God), a treasure-house of supernatural
powers that grow from more to more.

GURU ARJAN

When with spiritual discipline (Simran and Dhyan, constant remembrance and concentration) the mind gets stilled and is at rest, then enlightenment comes. Rare indeed are such souls in the world; all those who are full of passion, anger or egoism, as most of us are, cannot have it. With it comes perfect satisfaction. Mind is controlled and

the soul awakens from the lethargic sleep of ages. All desires come to an end, and one gets absorbed in his own self, and is gifted with all-pervading prevision and transvision, and rises into cosmic awareness. All karmas are burned away. Death, the last enemy of mankind, loses its sting; the minions of death cannot come near such a jivan-mukta or liberated being. These benefits cannot be had by outer intellectual wrestling.

Adorned with the kindly Light of God, the spirit becomes acceptable to the Lord Consort.

The wandering wits learn to live under
control and delight in Truth,
And one drinks the Jnana Ras (the
exhilarating vintage of Naam) and
desires nothing else.[32]

With all our washings of the body we can-
not keep it clean,
But the elixir of Jnana (the Word) purifies
both the mind and the body.[33]

The collyrium of Jnana destroys all fear
and makes you see the Reality,
And you gain omniscience with the stilling
of the mind.[34]

Devotion to the Master creates love true
and eternal,
And the gift of Jnana gives knowledge of
the three worlds. [35]

GURU NANAK

Awakened into the Light of Jnana, Kabir is dyed in the color of the Lord,
All the world over are deluded; my mind is now metamorphosed by the all-pervading Power (Ram).[36]

KABIR

How can one control the wandering wits?
The mind can be stilled through the grace of the Master, and with Jnana he returns to his Native Home.[37]

GURU AMAR DAS

Flower blossoms into fruit and then fades away,
All actions are for Jnana and then fall off.[38]

GURU RAM DAS

Nanak says: He alone wakes up into Reality
Who applies the collyrium of Jnana to his eyes.[39]

Jnana is a supreme embellishment for the bride (soul);
Blessed is the bride that loves her Lord.[40]

GURU AMAR DAS

The wild elephant of the mind is controlled and domesticated by the mahout of a Guru, by means of the Rod of Enlightenment. The Light of the Guru, variously called Shabd, Naam or Dhun, forms a link between the soul and the Oversoul,

and once this is firmly grasped, one can easily transcend to the Mansions of God.

> Ye have put off the old man with his deeds,
> and put on the new man, which is
> renewed in knowledge after the image
> of him that created him.[41]
>
> ST. PAUL

The agency that regenerates or transforms our nature is the Holy Spirit. The experience which He must bring to us is called the New Birth, the Resurrection or the Second Advent.

> If any man be in Christ, he is a new
> creature: old things are passed away;
> behold, all things are become new.[42]
>
> ST. PAUL

Jnana or Enlightenment comes as a gift from God:

> Thy glance of grace gives one right under-
> standing,
> And brings one to the crest jewel of
> Jnana.[43]
> Seek not Jnana in the world, for verily ye
> shall not find it,
> With the writ of the Lord one gets it, and
> not by one's endeavors.[44]
>
> GURU NANAK

> Inside the body is the Jnana of the Master,
> a crest jewel that grants salvation,

O Nanak! with His glance of grace, he may grant it to whomever He may like, and make him acceptable.[45]

GURU AMAR DAS

Those who are devoted to the Satguru are honored and accepted in His Court,
The Light of Jnana dawns in them to whom He may grant it.[46]

GURU ARJAN

Having once been gifted with Enlightenment (or Jnana or Divine Knowledge and Experience), one must practice it from day to day so as to develop it and not lose the holy Light of Heaven by sheer neglect in the mighty swirl of the world. Jesus Christ, in unambiguous terms, warns us against this danger of losing the peerless gift from God and His Elect, the Godman:

Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness.[47]

BOOK TEN

Charan Kamal

The Lotus Feet of the Master

Charan Kamal

1. The Lotus Feet

VERY FREQUENTLY, we come across the term "Charan Kamal" in the scriptures of various religions.

> Listen, O simpleton! Learn to fall at the feet of a Guru.[1]
>
> GURU NANAK

> If your thoughts be centered on the feet of the Guru,
> You will get all your desires fulfilled.[2]
>
> GURU ARJAN

In the Gospels, also we find references to anointing and kissing the feet of Christ. Among the Hindus and Muslims, there is still the custom of doing obeisance by touching the feet of divines and holy men. Let us try to understand the significance or import of injunctions and practices like these.

A living Master is a great necessity in the science of spirituality. He is the central figure around which the entire system revolves. He is the human pole through which the divine power works in this world. Without his guidance and help, one can do nothing and achieve nothing. No wonder then that one has to surrender one-

self at the holy feet of the Master. As Kamal or the lotus flower is considered to be something sublime and sacred, the feet of the Master are generally spoken of as Charan Kamal or the Lotus Feet, fit to be worshiped and adored in all sincerity and humility.

Without the munificence of a Guru one gets naught,
Though one may engage in millions of meritorious deeds.[3]

GURU AMAR DAS

Set aside all thy wisdom and fall at the feet of a Guru.[4]

Be thou the dust of sadhus' feet and forget thyself altogether,
Leave all thy cunning and learning and fall at the feet of the Guru.[5]

Leave aside all thy wisdom and knowledge,
And fall at the feet of the Saints.[6]

GURU ARJAN

Listen, thou ignorant self, learn to fall at the feet of the Master,
Be thou devoted to the Word, and then thou shalt have no fear of death.
The unfortunate ones have a heavy load on their heads and can never be happy.[7]

GURU NANAK

It is with a writ in the forehead that one
communes with the precious Word,
And thy works shall be fashioned out by
devotion to the holy feet of the Master.[8]

Think of the King of Kings — the Lord of
Creation,
Depend on Him alone who is immanent in
all;
Cast aside all thy artifices and get hold of
the Master's feet.[9]

GURU ARJAN

O dear self! Thou wouldst be blessed by
devotion to the all-pervading Power,
Serve day and night at the feet of the
Master, for that is the true devotion to
the Lord.[10]

GURU NANAK

From exhortations like the following of Guru Arjan, it is clear that he wants us to find a living Master and surrender ourselves to him, to profit from his company and close association by molding our life and conduct according to his pattern, for in this lies the secret of spiritual success. "To contact the feet of a Guru" in this context means to meet a Master and enter his fold.

Bow at the feet of His devotees.[11]

Remain always in the company of the Saints,
And be devoted to the feet of the Master.[12]

Blessed is the moment when I see the
Master,
Let me be a holocaust at the feet of the
Master.[13]

I live simply to see you
And to do obeisance at your feet.[14]

I get constantly enlivened by seeing the
Master,
And quench my thirst with the washings
of his feet.[15]

May I always live in the sweet
remembrance of the Word and be
blessed in body and mind;
Let me drink the washings of thy feet,
O merciful Master divine.
Blessed indeed was the time when I
reached thy door, O Lord;
O Nanak, God in His utmost mercy led me
to the door of the Perfect Master.[16]

GURU ARJAN

The feet of the Master are often spoken of as a pool of sacred nectar that grants salvation to the world-weary pilgrims on the Path.

Listen ye to the Saints: Salvation lies in the
true Word,
Service at the feet of the Master and
devotion to his Word is the true
pilgrimage.

Such a one is acceptable at His Court and
obtains a seat of honor.[17]

GURU ARJAN

Again there is abundant sweetness, strange and peculiar, in the feet of the Master, and untold blessings flow therefrom.

Sweet are the lotus feet of the Master,
With God's writ one sees them;
Myriad are the merits that follow such a
blessed vision.[18]

GURU ARJAN

The washings of their feet are taken to be an Elixir of Life, by taking which one gets Life Eternal. To meet a living Master is no easy task. Really blessed is a person who has the good fortune to come across one and recognize him.

O Nanak! It is extreme good fortune of one
To cast aside pride and fall at the Master's
feet.[19]

O Nanak, it is through fullness of karma
that one gets devoted to the feet of the
Master.[20]

Nanak says: Blessed am I,
That I serve the feet of a Sadh.[21]

GURU ARJAN

It is with the grace of God that one gets an opportunity to meet a living Master and have loving devotion for his feet:

God linked me with a Saint,
And I found a boon companion,
And acquired love for His feet.[22]

He on whom God showers His mercy
Begins washing the feet of a Satguru.[23]

GURU RAM DAS

God has graced me with His mercy,
The feet of the Master are now implanted in me.[24]

GURU ARJAN

Blessed is the day when a person engages in the service of the Master's feet and bows in all humility before him and touches his lotus feet with his forehead and beard.

Blessed are the eyes that see the Master's Form,
Blessed is the forehead that touches his feet.[25]
Blessed is the day that I met the Master,
And did obeisance at his feet.[26]

GURU ARJAN

Blessed are the beards that touch his feet.[27]

GURU AMAR DAS

Bhai Gurdas says in this context:

Through ages one has had a human birth,
But blessed is the life wherein one takes refuge at the Master's feet,

Blessed are the eyes that behold the Master,
Blessed the ears that hear the Master,
Blessed the nose that smells the fragrance
of his feet,
Blessed the tongue that repeats the words
of the Master,
Blessed the hands that serve the Master,
Blessed the feet that circumambulate the
Master.[28]

Refuge at the feet of the Master includes
the merit of millions of pilgrimages,
Even the gods and goddesses are eagerly
engaged in the service of the Master;
Refuge at the feet of the Master brings
about fruition of all desires.
All supernatural powers flow from him
and so doth immortality;
Refuge at the feet of the Master takes one
to the region of desirelessness.
Devotion as enjoined by him works out
salvation from bondage;
Refuge at the feet of the Master has a merit
that is inconceivable,
He works without any thought and is the
potential cause (material and efficient)
of all that exists.[29]

Since the time I took refuge at the feet of
the Master
All the world seems engaged in
worshiping at his feet;

His lotus feet constitute a pool of the Water
of Life (*Charan-Amrit);*
I wish and long for the dust of his feet —
the dust that has created the Universe.
His lotus feet are the true wealth and a true
haven of peace,
They grant ineffable vision and lead to the
Path Godward:
His lotus feet have a glory that is
indescribable and incomprehensible,
Not this, not this, I bow to thee again and
again, O Lord.[30]

BHAI GURDAS

It is really a great blessing to have a living Master. We have in the scriptures countless merits that accrue from the lotus feet of the Master. He dispels all our sorrows and afflictions. One is rid of the deadly sins of lusts and passions, attachments and desires. The body and mind both get purified. Freed from all bondage, one takes life as it flows by, unfettered and unaffected, fearless of what may come — including death itself, which he knows how to meet. With the Power of the Word, he leads a life of perfect contentment and ecstasy and rises into Universal Consciousness and hereafter lives at all times at the level of the soul. This is Jivan Mukti or liberation while living.

Blessed is the time I see the Master,
And make an offering of myself at his feet.[31]

A true Satguru is a great Donor,
When I see him all my ills vanish;
His lotus feet are worthy of adoration.[32]

GURU ARJAN

I adore the feet of the Satguru,
Guru is the helmsman
And his Word the barque by which we cross over.[33]

GURU NANAK

A glance of grace from the Satguru is more than millions of kingships;
The moment he manifests the Word, my body and mind feel exhilarated;
But it is with the writ of God that one gets devoted to the feet of the Satguru.[34]

Whatever the condition, sitting or standing, I sing the virtues of the Lord and my sorrows and afflictions disappear.
Nanak says: It is with the fullness of Karma that the mind gets attached to the feet of the Master.[35]
All things are added unto him who casts a loving look at the Master;
Those whose minds are fixed in the feet of the Master are truly blessed. [36]

Nanak says: If it be so ordained,
Leave all pride and be engaged in the feet of the Master.[37]

GURU ARJAN

Blessed are those whom the Satguru has accepted,
Nanak is ever attached to the feet of the Master.[38]

GURU NANAK

As ye sow, so shall ye reap, and reap the seeds sown in ages past,
On whomsoever He showers His mercy, he washes the feet of the Satguru.[39]

GURU RAM DAS

Inner vision of the Master's feet

A living Master is not a physical entity alone. He is an active live principle that transcends at will the physical plane and traverses into higher spiritual regions. The Radiant Form of the Master, called Guru Dev, guides and helps the human soul to extricate itself from the trammels of the flesh, by means of Simran or repetition of the charged words given by the Master. In subtle regions, the spirit is enabled to stay by the magnetic influence of the Radiant Divine Form of the Guru (Divya-rup). Hence, the necessity for devotion at the sacred feet of the inner Radiant Form as well.

Keep the feet of the Master ever engraven in thy heart;
Thou shalt have all thy wishes fulfilled.[40]

Let the remembrance of the Master's feet
abide in thy mind,
All thy sufferings shall vanish and thine
enemies be destroyed.[41]

Let the remembrance of the Master's feet
abide in thy mind
And thou shalt be saved from the hell
fires.[42]

The feet of the Master are manifest in my
forehead,
This is why all my trials and tribulations
have now ended.[43]

The blessed form of the Master is manifest
in my forehead;
Whenever I peep within, I find him there;
His lotus feet are the source of my very
life.[44]

GURU ARJAN

The entire Radiant Form of the Master as it appears within is blessed indeed. The Divine Light emanating from the feet of the Master is resplendent and is the first to dawn; with it comes the entire form. As a harbinger of the Divine Presence, it is fit to be worshiped and loved. From stage to stage, this Holy Light grows in luster. Swami Tulsi Das, the famous author of the Hindi Ramayana, spoke of it as follows:

> The nails of the Master's feet are more lustrous than the shining crest jewel.
> A concentration on them opens the inner vision and one becomes all-knowing.[45]

Maulana Rumi also speaks of it:

> When the *Pir* (Master) appears within, you become knower of the past, present and future.

This is tantamount to what is technically called "Fana-fil-Sheikh" or merging one's identity in, or becoming one with the Sheikh or Master. Hereafter the duality between the disciple and the Master ceases and they become one in spirit. The disciple truly becomes a Guru-man. The Astral Form of the Master appears when one rises above body consciousness. When the sensory currents (or consciousness) through the process of Simran collect at the center between the two eyebrows, the light sprouts forth and when one goes further this Radiant Form manifests itself. So long as this Divine Form of the Master does not come to guide, one cannot march on the spiritual path and gain the Kingdom of Heaven; for Guru precedes God and leads us Godward. This Radiant Form remains ever with the disciple, no matter where he may be, and helps the pilgrim spirit on the Path; leads her beyond the Trigun-atmak regions (physical, astral, causal) and takes her to the Fourth

Grand Division called Sat Lok, which is a purely spiritual realm.

The feet (Light) of the Master shine in my forehead,
No more am I a prey to trials and tribulations.[46]

The Blessed Form of the Master is ever present in my forehead;
Every moment as I look up, I do behold the Divine Form;
And now I live and breathe by the grace of the Master's lotus feet.[47]

Blessed indeed is the human body in which dwell the feet of the beloved. [48]

GURU ARJAN

The manifestation of the Guru Dev, or the Astral Form of the Master, is purely a gift of God. By Divine grace alone, initiates are blessed with this precious gift.

I am enraptured with seeing the lotus feet of the Radiant Form of the Master,
It is by the grace of the Master that one comes to serve the Lord.[49]

GURU ARJAN

The Lotus Feet of God (Naam)

We have pertinent allusions in the scriptures to God's Feet as well, for example:

> Contact thou the feet of Hari through the Guru's Shabd.[50]
>
> GURU AMAR DAS

> Meditate on the Lotus Feet of the Lord.[51]
>
> GURU ARJAN

There is in fact no difference whatever between the Lotus Feet of the Lord and of the Master. But what do the words "Lotus Feet" stand for and what do they signify? These words mean nothing more nor less than the Sound Principle called Naam, Kalma or Word, which, emanating from the Highest Region and passing through various grades of density, reverberates at the lowest level of the subtle plane at the center between the two eyebrows; and this is what the Master links the spirit with at the time of initiation.

> Wonderful is the Harmony of God,
> By devotion to the Lotus Feet of the wondrous Lord one becomes a Sadhu.[52]
>
> GURU ARJAN

Here the term is synonymous with the Sound Current, which manifests Itself through the grace of some Master, and by attuning with which, one becomes a Sadh (disciplined soul).

Should you live with a Saint for some time,
A melodious strain of soft music appears
of itself.[53]

Cutting asunder all bonds, one gets
established in the Lotus Feet,
And remains absorbed in the Sound
Current.[54]

GURU ARJAN

In the terminology of Saints, devotion to the Word is devotion to the Lotus Feet of the Master, and those who get absorbed in the Harmony of the Word drink the Water of Life proceeding from the Lotus Feet of the Lord. In fact, the reference here is to the Sonorous Light which, emanating from the Feet of the Master, welcomes the pilgrim soul as it proceeds on its journey Homeward through the astral and subtle regions.

Nanak prays: Make me a slave of such
votaries who are absorbed in Thy Lotus
Feet.[55]

GURU ARJAN

Again, when through spiritual sadhna the kindly Light of God dawns within, that too is described as the Lotus Feet of the Lord, since it emanates from His Feet and is the dust of His Feet (Charan Dhur).

The moment His Feet are firmly established
within,

A Light dawns and one meets the Lord.[56]

GURU ARJAN

Naam or Word is the fountainhead of Heaven's Light. Devotion to the Naam is nothing but devotion to His Feet.

While walking or sitting, waking or asleep,
Be in tune with the Word (Guru-Mantra),
Be devoted to His Feet in the company of a Saint and thus cross over the sea of life.[57]

GURU ARJAN

The greatness of the Lotus Feet is the be-all and end-all. It is the summum bonum of life.

In the bliss of His holy feet, I remain absorbed from end to end.[58]

KABIR

One cannot describe the beatitude of His Feet. But one can experience and feel something of the bliss arising therefrom:

O Kabir! With what should I compare the bliss of the Lotus Feet?
Words fail to do any justice, but one can be convinced by having some experience of it.[59]

KABIR

By remaining in constant touch with the Light and Sound Current, one can always be devoted to the Lotus Feet and derive untold benefits therefrom.

Those who depend on the Lotus Feet of the Master,
Are all the time absorbed in the Word.[60]

They that live by the Lotus Feet depend on One alone,
God is their only refuge, the woof and warp of their existence.[61]

My comrade, friend and guide is the Most High,
His Lotus Feet within me are my very life.[62]

His Lotus Feet are my support,
He is the treasure-house of all Bliss,
Let me be engaged in His Kirtan,
So long as the life-breath lasts.[63]

Thy Feet are helmsmen to ferry us across the sea of life.[64]

With Thy Feet, Thou hast ferried many across the world.[65]

The mind rides in safety in the ship of *Hari Charan*.[66]

GURU ARJAN

The Lotus Feet appear in the depths of the mind:

To listen to the Kirtan (Word) is the daily routine of a Sadh,

When the Lotus Feet become fully manifest within, one lives by constant devotion to them.[67]

With the Lotus Feet within, I meditate on them all the time.[68]

GURU ARJAN

He alone engages in the worship of the Lotus Feet to whom God may grant it.

All are strung like beads on one string;
He alone takes shelter in the Feet who is so destined.[69]
By Thy glance of grace attract us to Thy feet.[70]

GURU ARJAN

The wealth of the Lotus Feet comes as a gift from the Satguru and he himself makes them manifest:

One engages in the devotion of the Lotus Feet,
If one gets the gift of the Feet from a Satguru.[71]

I offer myself a sacrifice at the Holy Feet,
And a sacrifice unto the Master for showing them to me.[72]

The Master has given me the wealth of the Lotus Feet,

And the unmoored has found a sheet-anchor.[73]

GURU ARJAN

It is through association with Sadhus and Saints that the Lotus Feet appear within:

The Sadhus and Saints manifest the
Heaven's Light,
And the Lotus Feet do manifest within.[74]

GURU ARJAN

How do the Lotus Feet come to abide in the mind? It is through Simran that the Lotus Feet appear.

The Simran of God drives away all
afflictions,
And the Lotus Feet do appear in the mind;
Meditate on the all-pervading Word all the
time,
And drink the Water of Life, O loved of
the Lord.[75]

Sing of the virtues of the Lord with the
Saints and waste not the precious life;
By singing the praises of the Lord, one not
only saves himself (from the wilderness
of life) but even those who are his kith
and kin;
The Lotus Feet have now come to abide in
my mind and I meditate on them all the
time,
Nanak hath taken his shelter with God and
hath offered his all unto Him.[76]

GURU ARJAN

When the all-pervading consciousness in man, which is operating through sensory currents, gets collected and concentrated through spiritual sadhna at one center, the seat of the soul, just behind and between the two eyebrows, the Lotus Feet or Naam becomes manifest. The spirit gets so much absorbed in the beautiful music that one is lost to himself and an indissoluble union between the soul and the Oversoul is effected. Face to face with Reality, he gets so much established therein that thereafter the world loses all its charms and cannot move him from his purpose.

The lotus feet of the Master are wondrously luminous. A rare Sadhu with great good fortune may be able to cast his eyes on them. These do appear in the heart of the devotee, behind the two eyebrows.

> A rare Sadhu may fall in love with the Lotus Feet of the Lord.[77]
>
> The Lotus Feet do appear within the mind of a devotee.[78]
>
> GURU ARJAN

If one gets in touch with the Lotus Feet, he attracts to himself the merit of all austerities, pilgrimages and acts of charity and devotion.

A meditation on the Lotus Feet of the Lord grants the merits of all devotional exercises and disciplines.[79]

Meditate on the Lotus Feet of the Lord;
This is the greatest pilgrimage and an act of ablution.[80]

Meditate day and night on the Word and drink Its ambrosia,
It shall give thee the benefit of all virtuous deeds and yogic exercises.[81]

The whole world is in the throes of lusts, passions and egotism,
The shelter of a Saint and devotion at his feet will dispel all troubles born of ignorance.[82]

A whole-hearted devotion to the feet of the Master saves one from all pangs and sorrows.[83]

Leave off all worldly comforts and embellishments of no consequence,
All passions and all delights take to their heels once you get to the feet of the Satguru.[84]

GURU ARJAN

By killing egotism the mind gets subdued,
And one loves the Master's feet forever;

By the Master's grace, the body and mind
are purified,
And one communes with the Holy Word.[85]

Let my body and soul be a sacrifice unto
the all-absorbing feet of the Master;
Satguru is a veritable Pool of Nectar,
and His Word rids the mind of all
imperfections. [86]

GURU AMAR DAS

The mind linked with the feet of the Master
Leaves the path of death far behind.[87]

GURU NANAK

As ballast in the boat moves across the
river,
So does a devotee of the Master safely
cross the sea of life.[88]

By devotion to the feet of the Master, I live
by remembering Hari;
By meditation on the Par Brahm, I drink
the Amrit.[89]

Wheresoever I see, I find myself at The
Feet,
May I be a sacrifice to The Feet.[90]

GURU ARJAN

The devotion to the True One is ever
wonderful,

By meditating on the Master's feet one
gains the highest merit.[91]

GURU NANAK

2. The Dust of the Lotus Feet
(CHARAN KAMAL DHUR)

The phrase "Charan Dhur" has also been used in the scriptures alternately with "Charan Kamal" and both signify the same thing.

The dust of the feet of living Masters

As the need of a living Master is of supreme importance, so is the need of the dust of his feet. Whatever comes in contact with the Divine human pole is indeed very blessed: the hem of his garments, the chair or carpet he sits on, the horse he rides on, the things he uses for one purpose or another. Many a person cured himself of leprosy or blindness by touching the hem of Christ's robe.

The entire world is Thine, my Lord;
Everyone eagerly seeks for the Dust of
Thy Feet.[92]

GURU RAM DAS

The service of Thy Feet is a panacea for all
ills,
Even the angels and seraphim wish for
Thy Dust.[93]

GURU ARJAN

Blessed indeed is the place which a Saint
treads upon,
The Rishis like Shankara and Narad pay
homage to it.[94]

Wherever a Sadhu walks the land,
The entire region becomes purified. [95]

GURU RAM DAS

Shamas Tabrez, a Muslim Saint, tells us:

With the Dust of a Saint, enlighten thine
eyes,
Then shalt thou see all from end to end;
Make for thee a collyrium from the Dust of
the Elect;
It shall make thee pure and also renovate
thy sight (enabling thee to see God).

Wherever God's elect sets up his habitat, that place becomes sanctified and in course of time grows into a place of pilgrimage. In fact, all sacred places owe their origin to the sanctifying influence of one or another holy man of God. The sanctity of Nankana Sahib, Panja Sahib and Kartarpur, for instance, is due to Guru Nanak who was closely associated with these places. Amritsar or the Pool of Nectar owes its origin to Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan. Similarly, Mecca and Medina owe their spiritual influence to the Prophet Mohammed. The importance of the holy city of Jerusalem is because of King David, the Hebrew

prophets, and Jesus Christ. Banaras, Hardwar and Allahabad on the banks of the Ganges, where the Rishis of old sat in meditation, have captured the imagination of Hindus who throng these places from year to year to gain religious merit. Sarnath and Bodh Gaya are still honored because of Lord Buddha. The relics of these various holy places are revered even by the heads of states, and monuments are raised to preserve them. But God's elect never stand in need of holy places. On the contrary, the sanctity of all such places is due to them. Truly a Godman is a moving place of pilgrimage.

> It is not the places that grace men but men the places.
>
> ST. AGESILAUS

> All the places of pilgrimage set up after the various gods and goddesses pine for the dust of the Sadhu's feet,
> All, all wish for a devotee of the Lord so as to be blessed with the feet of a Sadhu.[96]

> The sacred Ganges, the Jumna, the Godavari and the Saraswati all strive for the dust of Sadhus' feet,
> As this dust alone can purify them of the enormous number of sins left over by the sinners.[97]
>
> GURU RAM DAS

In the dust of the Saints' feet, one can find all the merits of the sixty-eight places of pilgrimage:

Through the mercy of the Saint, infatuation
and delusion are swept off,
A smearing with the dust of the Sadhus is
the most meritorious. [98]
GURU RAM DAS

With the true Word, there comes in perfect
satiety,
In the dust of a Saint there is the merit of
all pilgrimages.[99]

The sight of a Saint grants one perfect
vision,
The dust of a Sadhu has the merit of
ablution at sacred pools.[100]
GURU AR.JAN

The light of myriads of crest jewels is of no
consequence,
And so also is the luster of millions of suns
and moons of no value,
As compared to the scintillating light of
him in whom He dwells,
And this happens only when countless
merits earned in past lives fructify
together;
Siva, Sanakadic and Brahma also wish for
the company of such a noble soul,
And he obtains the merit of all the
pilgrimages

In whose forehead shines the light of His sight,
The sight of His Lotus Feet flaming in his forehead.[101]

BHAI GURDAS

The merit of visiting all the holy places comes of itself to a person who bows in humility to a living Saint. It is because of the dust of the feet of such a Saint that a person is able to rise in cosmic awareness and become a theist in the true sense of the word.

The Kind and Gracious Lord has become visible,
And Nanak lives by the dust of His Saints.[102]

GURU ARJAN

Nanak ever prays for the gift of Saints' dust,
Nothing else does he want from the Giver.[103]

GURU RAM DAS

It is a great good fortune to have the dust of Saints,
O Nanak! By devotion to the Master one worships the Lord.[104]

Make me of lowly mind, my saintly friend, your mercy has made me fortunate enough,
I have had extreme bliss ineffable;

Nanak is now gifted with the dust
(light emanating from the feet of the Master).[105]

GURU ARJAN

In the world of Thy creation, my Lord,
All seek the dust of Thy devoted Sadhus.
O Nanak! He who is so destined
Gets the dust of the Sadhu (light of his feet) and is safely carried across.[106]

GURU RAM DAS

Thou art the support of Thy devotees from time out of mind,
Nanak ever craves for the dust of their feet; O grant it, Munificent Lord.[107]

O Knower of all the hearts, complete within Thyself,
Grant unto me the boon of Sadhus' dust.[108]

The dust of Thy devotee is wondrous sweet,
He alone gets it who holds the writ from Thee.[109]

GURU ARJAN

With a great good fortune one gets from the Saints the gift of dust (light),
It is by devotion to the Master that one gets absorbed in the Lord.[110]

GURU RAM DAS

Fortunate is he who secures the dust of a Satguru,

Nanak would ever like to sacrifice himself
unto such a Master.[111]

Blessed is he who makes friends with a
Sadhu,
Nanak seeks the dust of such devotees,
may He grant him that dust.[112]

GURU ARJAN

I would like to adorn my forehead with the
dust of devotees of the perfect Satguru,
O Nanak! The gift of dust from them
comes through a great good fortune to
those alone who remain absorbed in the
Holy Word.[113]

GURU AMAR DAS

Inner dust of the Master's Radiant Form

The Holy Light that emanates from the feet of the Radiant Form of the Master on the astral plane is often described as the dust of the feet of that form.

Partake of the Bread of Life in the precious
immortal Naam,
And smear thy forehead with the dust of
the Saints.[114]

GURU RAM DAS

Sant Tulsi Das Ji speaks of it thus:

Take care to retain attention within the two
eyebrows,

Purifying the mind and body, fix thy gaze
at one center;
Then shalt thou penetrate into the Beyond,
seeing the Reality face to face,
O Tulsi! The dust of the Saints spreads
before thee a carpet of Light.

Inner dust: What it is

In the Sikh scriptures, it is described as Eternal and Everlasting Naam or Word — the Sound Current.

Nanak prays for the Sadhus' dust,
It is the precious Naam of God.[115]

I would like to make my hair a tasseled fly-drive for the Saints,
And bow in adoration unto them at the *Til* (still point in the body where his Radiant Form appears) and adorn my face with their Dust (Light).[116]

GURU ARJAN

The dust of the Saints is in every one of us. We live by the Light of God within, technically known as Charan Dhur or the Dust of the Feet. It has in it the Sound Principle or Harmony — the active life principle that grants life everlasting.

The dust of the Lord's feet is a peerless gift that one can pray for and seek. The gods, goddesses, Rishis and Munis long for it.

I have adorned my forehead with the Dust
of the Lord (Heaven's Light) ;
Even the Rishis, Munis and gods are far
removed from it.[117]

NAMDEV

In the Dust of the Sadhus lies the merit of myriads of pilgrimages, fasts and vigils, and countless yogic disciplines.

One can acquire the merit of myriads of
pilgrimages and yogic practices if one
is able to secure the gift of dust from a
Sadhu (Inner Light).[118]

GURU ARJAN

In addition to these references to "the dust of the Saints' feet," there are also references to "the dust of Gur-sikhs' feet"; that is, the dust of the true Sikhs or devoted disciples of the Master.

The lowly Nanak asks for the dust of
the devoted disciples of the Master
(*Gur-sikh)*
Who himself practices the Holy Word and
instructs others to do the same.[119]

GURU RAM DAS

This dust (the Light and Sound of God) is an elixir of life that grants salvation — a life of bliss both here and hereafter.

Charan Dhur: Its merits

1. It rids one of all pains and sorrows, and the grief of separation.

They alone are rich, O Lord (complete and perfect as Thou art) who practice the Word under the guidance of a Master,
Poor Nanak asks for the Dust of a Sadhu, for it rids the mind of all pains, sorrows and grief.[120]

GURU RAM DAS

All ills vanish, pains and sorrows depart,
When one is purified by the dust of the Saints.[121]

All ills have taken leave, now that I have tasted the Dust of a Saint;
It sanctifies the sinner in no time by dispelling the darkness of ignorance.[122]

GURU ARJAN

2. It casts off lusts and egotism.

Take a daily dip in the dust of the Master,
It will wash off the egotism of ages on ages.[123]
Besmear your face and forehead with the dust of a Sadhu and rid yourself of the filth of lust and fury,
See the Light of God even in the pariah and wish well to all.[124]

GURU ARJAN

3. It sanctifies the mind by destroying sins and removing the accumulated filth of ages.

My perfect Satguru, I have taken shelter with thee;
The mind gets rarefied with the dust of the Saints.[125]

The eyes are purified by Thy sight, and the hands when they are engaged in Thy service;
The heart is purified by Thy presence within and the forehead by the dust of the Saints.[126]

GURU ARJAN

The sacred waters of the Ganges, Jumna, Godavari and Saraswati strive for the dust of the Sadhus (outer);
We, filled with all ills and egotism, can also be purified by the dust of the Sadhus (inner).[127]

GURU RAM DAS

A dip in the dust of the devotee's feet washes down the ills of ages upon ages.[128]

Besmear the dust of Saints on your forehead,
And cleanse yourself of the ills of past ages.[129]

GURU ARJAN

4. It fulfills all wishes and desires and even the innate latencies of the mind.

The contact with the feet of the Master
awakens Reality and fulfills all desires;
The dust of the Saints is wish-yielding and
brings about union with the Lord.[130]

GURU ARJAN

In His great mercy, God has brought me to
a perfect Master,
All my heart's desires have now been
fulfilled with the dust of the Master.[131]

GURU RAM DAS

5. It is the harbinger of peace and bliss, grants freedom from the cycle of births and deaths, and saves one from the Angel of Death.

After long and ceaseless wanderings, I
have come unto Thee, Hari Rai, the
Destroyer of all fear;
The devotees get bliss through the dust of
a Sadh and Nanak too has been so
blessed.[132]

Be in communion with the Holy Word, for
that is the true devotion;
The company of the Saints puts an end to
births and deaths, O Nanak! This is the
virtue of their dust.[133]

Obeisance unto the Saviour, who got us
absorbed in Him,

A bath in the dust of a Sadhu, O Nanak!
bestows innumerable blessings.[134]

Their (Saints') very sight is the source of
great bliss,
And their dust rescues one from death.[135]

Nanak says: He who secures the Saint's
dust within,
Even the Angel of Death cannot come
near him.[136]

GURU ARJAN

6. It helps in saving millions of souls and one becomes Jivan Mukta or liberated in life.

Besmear the face and forehead with the
dust of a Sadhu,
O Nanak! Thus saved, sing the praises of
the Lord.[137]

GURU ARJAN

Grant unto me the devotion of the Master,
O Satguru, so that I may remain
absorbed in the all-pervading Word;
Grant me the dust of a perfect Master,
O Lord, so the sinners like me may also
rest in Thee, freed from all bondage. [138]

GURU AMAR DAS

Dyed in the color of the Lord, my mind
sings of the Lord,
Salvation comes from the dust (the Word)
of a Sadhu.[139]

God be merciful to poor Nanak!
Grant unto him the dust of the Sadhus so
that he may be saved.[140]

GURU ARJAN

7. It opens the inner vision wherewith one sees and witnesses the all-pervading Power of God everywhere.

I crave the dust of Thy devotees;
By practice of the Word, O Nanak! God
Himself becomes visible.[141]

In the dust of the Sadhu, one witnesses
the presence of God around him.[142]

GURU ARJAN

8. It gives bliss here and hereafter and one is honored at His Court.

Whoever dedicates his life to the service of
the Lord (Hari)
And with full faith has besmeared his face
with the dust of a Sadh Guru
Shines in the glory of the Lord both here
and hereafter and is imbued with
intoxication to the core of his heart.[143]

Those who adorn themselves with the dust
of a Sadhu,
Turn their back on the world and turn to
the Word,

They are honored in His Court and their faces shine with glory.[144]

In the Court of God, they sit in honor and glory,
Lowly Nanak prays for the dust of such devotees of the Master.[145]

GURU RAM DAS

9. It grants the bliss of Sehaj.

O Nanak! In the dust of the devotee there is the bliss of Sehaj and extreme ecstasy;
All things get straightened by themselves by devotion to the perfect Master.[146]

GURU ARJAN

10. It effects union with Truth.

Live in devotion to the feet of a Sadh,
Besmear your body with the dust of his feet,
Serve him with all your mind and soul,
Then shall you reach the True Homeland.[147]

GURU ARJAN

It grants conquest over death and all the deadly sins drop off by themselves. Nature, the handmaid of God, becomes a bound slave. With the inner vision opened, one sees God everywhere and spends his days happily in His beneficent presence, a conscious co-worker with Him.

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TO THE HONEST SEEKER

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197. Asa M4
198. *Ibid.*
199. Ramkali M3
200. Gauri M3
201. *Ibid.*
202. Majh M3
203. Gauri M3
204. Asa M3
205. Maru M4
206. Asa M5
207. Sorath M1
208. Dhanasri M4
209. Sarang War M1
210. Ramkali M5
211. Dhanasri M3
212. Maru M1
213. Gauri M4
214. Bilawal War M4
215. Suhi M4
216. Asa M5
217. Gauri M5
218. *Ibid.*
219. Kalyan M4
220. Sarang M5
221. Asa M5
222. Sarang M5
223. Gauri M5
224. Ramkali M3
225. Gauri M5
226. Kanra M5
227. Todi M5
228. Gauri M5
229. *Ibid.*
230. Asa M4
231. Sri Rag M1
232. Gujri War M5
233. Jaitsri M4
234. Basant M4
235. Shalok M3
236. Gauri M1
237. Maru M5
238. Gauri M5
239. Asa M3
240. *Ibid.*
241. Asa M1
242. Maru M5
243. Kedara Kabir
244. Basant M9
245. Basant M1
246. Shalok Kabir
247. Gauri M1
248. Sri Rag M1
249. Bhairon Kabir

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2. Basant M1
3. Asa M4
4. Jap Ji 2
5. John 1:1-5
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10. Asa M4
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12. Sri Rag M5
13. Basant M5
14. Majh War M1
15. Tao Te Ching 1
16. Chandogya Upanishad, I; Maitreya Upanishad, Ch. 6
17. Page 112
18. III: 17-6 and 9-3
19. Bhairon M3
20. Bhagavad Gita 6:44-45
21. Shalok 31
22. Vak-Ambrani Sukat
23. Sukat 30
24. Shalokas 80, 81, 83-84, 92, 95-98, 101, 105
25. Al-anwar of Maulana Sheikh Mohd. Akram Sabri
26. *Ibid.*, p. 106
27. Bhairon M1
28. Sorath M3
29. Bihagra War M4
30. Maru M3
31. Sri Rag M1
32. Matthew 13:14
33. Isaiah 30:21
34. Nad Bind Upanishad, Shalok 33, 34
35. Hidayat Nama
36. Tazkra-i-Ghousia
37. Sarang M3
38. Sarang War M4
39. Matthew 13:15
40. Basant M1
41. Sri Rag M3
42. Sorath M3
43. Pran Sangli
44. Ram. War M3
45. Matt. 7:13-14
46. Luke 13:24
47. Gauri Kabir
48. Majh M3
49. Ramkali M1
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*
52. Sorath M1
S3. Gauri M5
54. Majh M3
55. Sarang War M4
56. John 1:4-5, 9-10
57. Isaiah 30:14
58. Basant Rag M1
S9. Sri Rag M3
60. Vadhans M5
61. John 8:51 (Jerusalem Bible)
62. John 7:37-38
63. John 4:10, 14
64. Jeremiah 2:13
65. Sri Rag M3
66. Sorath War M4
67. *Ibid.*
68. Vadhans M3
69. Majh M3
70. Parbhati M1
71. *Ibid.*
72. Asa M3
73. Sawai M4
74. Suhi M3
75. Basant M3
76. Parbhati M1
77. Shalok M5
78. Sri Rag M1
79. Ramkali M1
80. Asa M3
81. Malar M1
82. Ramkali M3
83. Ramkali M1
84. *Ibid.*
85. *Ibid.*
86. Maru M3
87. Jap Ji 38
88. Majh M3
89. Gauri M3
90. *Ibid.*
91. Sarang War M4
92. Sarang War Shalok M3
93. Sri Rag M3
94. Basant M1
95. Parbhati M3
96. *Ibid.*
97. Asa M1
98. Sri Rag M3
99. Gujri War M3
100. Sri Rag M3
101. Sarang War M4
102. Gond Kabir
103. John 3:3, 5-8
104. Ezekiel 36:26-27
105. Galatians 2:20
106. Matthew 10:39
107. Ramkali M1
108. Nut M4
109. Prabhati M1
110. Jap Ji 4
111. Asa M1
112. Ramkali M1
113. Sarang M3
114. Prabhati M1

115. Shalok Kabir
116. Bhairon M3
117. Asa War M1
118. Bhairon M3
119. Basant M1
120. Asa M3
121. Kalyan M4
122. Malar M1
123. Sri Rag M1
124. Malar M4
125. Asa M5
126. Gauri M1
127. Asa M1
128. Basant M3
129. John 6:35, 5I
130. John 4:14
131. Gauri M5
132. Sorath M5
133. Asa M1
134. Asa M5
135. Ramkali M1
136. Ramkali M1
137. Jaitsri M1
138. Sarang M5
139. Bhairon M5
140. Ramkali M1
141. Vadhans M5
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143. Majh M3
144. Sorath Kabir
145. War 19: P. 8, 20
146. Suhi M5
147. Sri Rag M1
148. Asa M5
149. Gauri M5
150. Bhairon M3
151. Sarang M1
152. War 13
153. Parbhati Kabir
154. Kanra War M4
155. Ramkali Beni Ji
156. Suhi M1
157. Jap Ji 16
158. War 29
159. War 6
160. War 7, Pauri 5
161. Bhairon M3
162. Sarang M4
163. Ramkali Kabir
164. Malar War M1
165. Isaiah 30:21
166. Kanra War M4
167. Ramkali M3
168. Maru M1
169. War 3
170. Ramkali M5
171. Ramkali Kabir
172. War 5
173. Bilawal M1
174. Sri Rag M3
175. Malar M4
176. Ramkali M1
177. Bilawal M5
178. Asa M5
179. War 20, Pauri 11
180. War 23, Pauri 13
181. Kabit 22
182. Asa M3
183. Maru M5
184. Asa M4
185. Ramkali M3
186. Asa M4
187. Ramkali M1
188. Maru M3
189. Ramkali M5
190. Kabit 12
191. Kabit 412
192. Kabit 11
193. Gauri M1
194. Suhi M5
195. Bilawal War M4
196. Gauri M5
197. Suhi M4
198. Majh M3
199. Asa M1
200. *Ibid.*
201. Asa M5
202. The Mysticism of Sound

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1. Revelation 22:7
2. John 4:14
3. I Corinth. 13:52
4. John 5:25
5. Revelation 14:3
6. Sri Rag M3
7. Bihagra M4
8. Sorath Bhikhan
9. Malar War M3
10. Gauri War M5
11. Ram War M5
12. Sorath War M4
13. Majh M5
14. Majh M3
15. *Ibid.*
16. Sarang War M2
17. Malar War M3
18. Gauri War M5
19. Parbhati M1
20. Sri Rag M3
21. Ram. War M5
22. Majh M5
23. Kanra War M4
24. Asa M4
25. Majh M3
26. Sarang War M2
27. Ramkali M5
28. Asa M3
29. Sri Rag M1
30. Sri Rag War M4
31. Majh M3
32. Ramkali M5
33. II Corinth. 4:6
34. Psalm 119:105
35. Gauri Kabir
36. Kalyan M4
37. Maru M4
38. Maru M 5
39. Luke 9:24
40. Gauri M5
41. Kedara Kabir
42. Wadhans M3
43. Sorath War M3
44. Majh M5
45. Sarang War M2
46. Parbhati M3
47. Thomas a Kempis
48. I Corinth. 15:50
49. Luke 9:23
50. Asa M4
51. *Ibid.*
52. Basant M1
53. Malar M5
54. Gauri War M4
55. Sri Rag War M4
56. Ramkali M3
57. Revelation 22: 1
58. Sorath M5
59. Majh M5
60. Sri Rag M5
61. Gauri M3
62. Majh M3
63. John 14:15
64. Sri Rag M3
65. *Ibid.*
66. Sri Rag War M4
67. Majh M5
68. Gauri M5
69. Gauri War M3
70. Sri Rag M4
71. Sorath M1
72. Parbhati M3
73. Asa M3
74. Malar M1
75. Asa M4
76. Sri Rag War M4
77. Sorath War M3
78. Malar War M1
79. Maru M1
80. Maru War M3
81. Sri Rag M4
82. Sukhmani
83. Gujri M5

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2. Kanra War Shalok M4
3. Ramkali Kabir
4. Bilawal M3
5. Asa M4
6. Kalyan M4
7. Wadhans War M3
8. Dhanasri M5
9. Jaitsri M4
10. Gauri M5
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. Gauri Kabir
16. Ramkali M5
17. Gauri M5
18. Wadh. War M3
19. Sorath M5
20. Ezekiel 36:26
21. Rag Asa M3
22. Rag Asa M1

23. Gauri M5
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26. Maru M5
27. Nut M5
28. Gond M5
29. Dhanna M5
30. Gauri M5
31. Maru M5
32. Gauri M5
33. Gond M5
34. Maru M5
35. Sorath M5
36. Majh M5
37. Bilawal M5
38. Gauri War M5
39. Gauri M5
40. Ramkali M9
41. Asa M5
42. Dev Gandh. M5
43. Gauri M5
44. Majh M4
45. Maru M5

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1. Maru M4
2. Asa M5
3. Sri Rag M1
4. Gauri M3
5. Ramkali M1
6. *Ibid.*
7. Sri Rag M3
8. Gujri War M3
9. Maru M3
10. Asa M3
11. *Ibid.*
12. Majh M3
13. Suhi M5
14. Gauri M1
15. Asa M3
16. Tilang M1
17. Gauri War M5
18. II Samuel 23:2
19. II Peter 2:21
20. Rag Maru M5
21. Ramkali M3
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28. Majh M3
29. Wadhans M3
30. Basant M1
31. Dev Gandhari M5
32. Bilawal M5
33. Gauri M5
34. Bihagra M5
35. Wak Ambarni Sukat
36. Kand 4, Sukat 30
37. Gauri M5
38. *Ibid.*
39. Ramkali Beniji
40. Sri Rag M3
41. Asa M3
42. Gauri Gaureri M3
43. Dhanasri M3
44. Maru M3
45. Ramkali M3
46. Gauri M3
47. Suhi M3
48. Sri Rag M1
49. Ramkali Kabir
50. Majh M5
51. Maru Soleh M5
52. Sorath M1
53. Dhanasri M3
54. *Ibid.*
55. Ramkali M3
56. Gauri M1
57. Ram. War M5
58. Maru M3
59. Gauri Gaureri M3
60. Nut M4
61. 1:17
62. Ramkali M1
63. Ramkali M5
64. Ramkali M1
65. Majh M5
66. Sri Rag M1
67. Asa M3
68. Asa M1
69. Asa M3
70. Majh M3
71. Gauri M5
72. Asa M4
73. Dhanasri M3
74. Ramkali M3
75. Gauri Gerasi M5
76. Sri Rag M3
77. Asa M5
78. Maru M3
79. Ramkali M1
80. Maru M1

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1. Vadhans M5
2. Gauri M5
3. *Ibid.*
4. Gond M5
5. John 8:12
6. I Peter 2:9
7. Parbhati M4
8. I Corinth. 6:19
9. Bhairon M5
10. Ephesians 2:8
11. Isaiah 64:6
12. Titus 2:11
13. Acts 4:12
14. Kanra M5
15. John 16:7-8, 13
16. Gauri M5
17. Gond M4
18. Sri Rag M5
19. Gauri M5
20. Shalok M9
21. Shalok Sahanskriti M5

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7. John 6:37
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9. John 14:6
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13. Luke 17:20-21
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16. Galatians 2:20
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18. Ramkali Dakhni Onkar
19. Bhairon M5
20. Dhanasri M9
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8. Majh M3
9. Suhi M4
10. Gauri M5
11. Gond Ravidas
12. Sorath M3
13. Sri Rag M3
14. Asa M4
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. Gauri M5
18. Basant M1
19. Asa M5
20. Vadhans War M3
21. Maru M5
22. Ramkali Kabir
23. Sri Rag M1
24. Asa War M1
25. Dev Gandhari M5

26. Maru War M3
27. Sorath War M3
28. Asa War M1
29. Gauri M3
30. Gauri Sukhmani M5
31. Sawaie M5
32. Sri Rag M1
33. Sorath M1
34. Sri Rag M1
35. *Ibid.*
36. Sri Rag Kabir
37. Asa M3
38. Bhairon: Bani Ram Das
39. Bhairon M3
40. Asa M3
41. Col. 3:9-10
42. II Corinth. 5:17
43. Asa M1
44. Asa War M1
45. Vadhans War M3
46. Sri Rag M5
47. Luke 11:35

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2. Asa M5
3. Maru M3
4. Sri Rag M5
5. *Ibid.*
6. Gauri M5
7. Sri Rag M1
8. Sri Rag M5
9. *Ibid.*
10. Sorath M1
11. Gauri M5
12. Sri Rag M5
13. Vadhans M5
14. Suhi M5
15. Gauri M5
16. Suhi M5
17. Sri Rag M5
18. Todi M 5
19. Asa M5
20. *Ibid.*
21. Gauri M5
22. Asa M4
23. Gauri War M4
24. Majh M5
25. Gauri M5
26. *Ibid.*
27. Shalok M3
28. Kabit 17
29. Kabit 72
30. Kabit 217
31. Vadhans M5
32. Sarang M5
33. Asa M1
34. Sri Rag M5
35. Sorath M5
36. Sri Rag M5
37. Asa M 5
38. Asa M1
39. Gauri War M4
40. Asa M5
41. Gauri M5
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*
44. Dev Gandhari M5
45. Ram Charitra Mansa
46. Gauri M5
47. Dev Gandhari M5
48. Dhanasri M5
49. Bilawal M5
50. Gujri M3
51. Todi M5
52. Sarang M5
53. Majh M5
54. Ramkali M5
55. Gujri M5
56. Asa M5
51. Maru M5
58. Shalok Kabir
59. *Ibid.*
60. Majh M5
61. Dhanasri M5
62. Asa M5
63. Bilawal M5
64. Gauri M5
65. Vadhans M5
66. Asa M5
67. Sarang M5
68. Dev Gandhari M5
69. Majh M5
70. Asa M5
71. *Ibid.*
72. Sarang M5
73. Sri Rag M5
74. Parbhati M5
75. Gauri M5
76. Dev Gandhari M5
77. Asa M5
78. Majh M5
79. Sri Rag M5
80. Gauri M5
81. Ramkali M5
82. Sri Rag M5
83. Suhi M5
84. Asa M5
85. Majh M3
86. *Ibid.*
87. Sorath M1
88. Gauri M5
89. Bilawal M5
90. *Ibid.*
91. Gauri M1
92. Malar M4
93. Bhairon M5
94. Kalyan M4
95. *Ibid.*
96. Malar M4
97. *Ibid.*
98. Gauri M4
99. Asa M5
100. Gauri M5
101. Kabit Savai 421
102. Dhanasri M5
103. Bihagra War M4
104. Gauri M5
105. Malar M5
106. Malar M4
107. Dev Gandhari M5
108. Vadhans M5
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110. Gauri M4
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120. Asa M4
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122. Ramkali M5
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129. Ramkali M5
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133. Gauri M5
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135. Ramkali M5
136. Gauri M5
137. Suhi M5
138. Suhi M3
139. Parbhati M5
140. Bilawal M5
141. Basant M5
142. *Ibid.*
143. Jaitsri M4
144. Gauri M4
145. Gauri War M4
146. Asa M5
147. *Ibid.*

Appendix

Circular 17

Love, Concentration and Self-Surrender

The Psychology of Mysticism

When one undertakes to reach a certain goal in any field of human activity, it is necessary to take stock of one's progress from time to time. It is only through such stock-taking that one can become conscious of one's shortcomings and errors, eradicate and uproot them, and plan out future progress. Having put our shoulders to the wheel of the Great Master's Cause, it is necessary that we should, in like manner, review our activity and achievement, from time to time. Without such self-analysis and self-criticism, no real advancement is possible; and it was to encourage this practice and make it a daily habit that, in the case of individual initiates, I insisted (and continue to insist) that they maintain a daily record of their thoughts, words and deeds, and of the period of meditation. What is necessary for us as individual initiates is even more necessary for us as members of a large movement.

Reviewing the work done in the past few years, there is much, I find, for which we may be grateful. Many have shown remarkable capacity for selfless service and others have made commendable progress on the inner path. Nevertheless, while noting this with pleasure, I cannot help observing the growth of tendencies which must be a matter of concern for all of us. In spite of repeated exhortations and persuasions, I find growing and springing up amidst us the weeds of

discord and disharmony. Competition seems to have taken the place of cooperation, rivalry that of love, and distrust that of trust and good faith.

The emergence of such fissiparous tendencies has marked the beginning of the decline of any great movement. Unless checked, they multiply and lead ultimately to serious rifts and divisions. The original goal is completely forgotten in the heat of controversy and debate, and the purpose we set out to achieve lies wholly neglected. If we are to escape this fate we must zealously watch ourselves, and rid ourselves of any undesirable traits that may be imperceptibly developing in us.

Why such disharmony should keep up is not difficult to tell. The Master cannot be present in his physical person everywhere and at all times. His mission must be carried on with the assistance of his disciples. These disciples are individuals inspired by spiritual longings, who have been put on the road, but who have not necessarily reached the goal. The ultimate end is not easy to attain, and very few indeed reach it within this lifetime. The Master's Cause must, therefore, be carried on with the aid of men and women who, in most cases, are yet on the path and have not attained perfection. Their vision is individual, not universal, and the viewpoint from which they see and judge is limited by the degree of spiritual development attained by them. When they are entrusted with any responsibility it is inevitable that they should discharge it within the terms of their own vision and insight. And when in discharging this responsibility they have to collaborate with others like themselves, others whose viewpoint is equally individual and distinct, the roots of discord begin. So long as they work directly under the guidance of the Master, all is well, but the moment

they have also to work in collaborating and cooperation, controversy begins. They should understand that they are all laborers in the field of the Master, working for promoting the Holy Cause of leading the seekers to the Goal of Life. The man who could see, could resolve at a touch the contradictory statements regarding the elephant made by the proverbial six blind men, but left to themselves, they could only wrangle and debate; each considered that he was right and the others wrong, and each distrusted what the others had to say.

If six men lacking full vision could not agree about the nature of so limited and well-defined an object as an elephant, it is not surprising that those with limited vision should be unable to harmonize completely on so vast and unlimited a subject as spirituality. And yet, while it is natural for those who lack full vision not to agree fully on such matters, we must not allow this limitation to create division and dissension. For if we fail to find a remedy, we will ultimately have to sacrifice the "Cause" which brought us together, and what a great loss that would be.

There is only one remedy for all such discord and that is Love. He, who has not mastered its secret, can never hope to be received in the Court of the Lord. It is the beginning and the end of spirituality. He who understands Love in its true nature and who lives and moves by its light shall, surely as two added to two makes four, attain the Lord.

Love and all things shall be added unto thee.

– CHRIST

Listen! for I give you the very essence of truth:
Those who have loved have reached the Lord.

– GURU GOBIND SINGH

Love knows selfless service, sacrifice, and self-surrender. Let no one interested in spiritual advancement perform service for the sake of appreciation. Selfless service is a great reward in itself. It even sacrifices one's personal interests for the cause one has sincerely taken up.

What is this love, of which all mystics Eastern and Western, have spoken so insistently? Is it like the love of the earth that we know? If you study the bonds of earthly love, you will find that at some point or another a trace of self-assertion is present in every case. Parent and child, friend and friend, man and wife; each is involved in a more or less strong drive for possession. It is a love that can often rise to great heights of self-sacrifice, and yet it is a love that is not wholly selfless.

But the Love of which the mystics speak is a love that must be completely purified of the self. If one has not attained complete purification in this respect, one's love is still not perfect and not truly acceptable in the eyes of the Lord. And so the love of mystics is one in which one completely and unreservedly surrenders one's self to one's love. The seeker who, having found a true Master, has developed such absolute love for him, steadily purifies himself of all imperfections and makes himself a fit recipient of Divine Grace. You may well ask why there is this insistent stress on complete self-surrender on the mystic path. The answer is simple: without this absolute surrender of the last vestiges of ego and selfhood, and without such complete absorption in the object of one's love, one cannot attain that unwavering concentration of all one's faculties which is the prerequisite of all inner progress. Absolute love and self-surrender are only other aspects of complete and flawless concentration. The moment the "self" enters into the picture and the

question of "I-ness" arises, the single-pointedness of concentration is dissipated and inner advancement is made impossible. Besides, the goal of the spiritual aspirant lies far beyond the limits of individuality. His goal is union with the Absolute and such union must necessarily be a denial of the limits that separate us from each other. He who cannot rise above the ego, the faculty which creates these very limits, cannot hope to attain to that station which is the denial of all individuality and a realization of the oneness of all life.

Hence it is that mystics of all traditions have been untiring in their stress of the need for absolute self-surrender. It was this cross of sacrifice of the self, the ego, of which Jesus spoke when he exhorted his disciples to bear their cross daily. For in every little act, word or thought, the ego is seeking to dominate us, and if the seeker is to triumph over it, he must be prepared to crucify it every moment. To achieve this degree of self-surrender, one must not look up to the Deity in Its Abstract form but in Its human form as the Master. For how else is one to know God's Will directly, in order to surrender one's self to it? What one may take as an intuition inspired by the Divine may be really one's own self speaking in disguise, and surrender to such seeming intentions may be really surrender to the self, the ego. However, if one has found a true Master, who is attuned to the Lord and is His mouthpiece, and obeys Him in all things completely and absolutely, he will surely destroy the hydra-headed serpent of the ego, and reach his heavenly home one day. There will be moments in the course of such love when one, judging from one's own limited understanding, doubts the validity of the Master's instructions, but such moments are only tests to make our self-surrender more complete and more secure, and he who passes

through these tests successfully will one day radiate with the glory of God.

Such love and self-surrender to the Will of the Lord embodied in the Master, has been the keystone of the teachings of all mystics and especially so of Sant Mat. Your main task as disciples, as initiates, is to cultivate these qualities to the very utmost and leave the rest to the Master. There will, of course, be moments of doubt and of questioning, but if you can pass through them with your love and your faith unscathed, you will find the spiritual road within steadily unfolding itself before you and all things being added unto you. The path is certainly not easy, but for one who has made such love the cornerstone of his life, nothing could be easier or more certain. Jesus never promised the peace and comfort with which the world is familiar. It was the cross he offered. We have to suffer; to reshape ourselves, to destroy the old and forge the new.

We have to face the ridicule of our fellows and the organized opposition of orthodox institutions. But if we have anchored ourselves in such a love of complete self-surrender, nothing can disturb the peace of our minds or distract the spiritual harmony that is ours. Initially, perhaps, it is easier in the East to take to the mystic path than it is in the West. There is in India, for example, a long standing tradition of seeking and following a Living Master; a tradition that is foreign to those to whom religion has been taught in terms of a closed revelation. Nevertheless, this initial advantage is not as great as it might at first appear. For the essential advantage in the field of spirituality is to be found not without but within. It lies not in the absence of outer opposition but in one's inner capacity for complete self-surrender and love; and outward obstacles may in fact act as tests and stimuli for the development of this

capacity. This ability to conquer the ego and to submit oneself to the Higher Will is as rare in the East as in the West, and wherever it can be found there you shall observe the true grandmark of spirituality.

It is this capacity that you must cultivate and develop if you really wish to make substantial progress in the spiritual field. I repeat that the path is not easy. You must crucify your ego and lay your selfhood at the altar of love for your Master. Rome was not built in a day and the True Abode of the Lord is not to be attained with a few weeks labor. Most seekers want quick results. They want miracles and sudden transformations. But the seed generates rapidly only in thin soil and then withers away. The seed that must grow into the life-giving tree must grow more slowly. The science of spirituality, as it has been taught by all Masters, and as it has been given to you, is a perfect science. Its truth has been demonstrated by some initial experience. The rest depends on your effort. The Divine Grace is ever ready to pour itself into the vessel, but the vessel must first be ready. The power to perform miracles is not very difficult to acquire, but it is not to be confused with true spirituality, which must be paid for with complete self-transformation and self-surrender.

This then is the task before you. If you aspire for spiritual salvation, then do not lose a moment in seeking to reform yourselves. Man making is the most difficult part of spirituality, and if you have perfected yourself in that field, then God realization is not difficult. Let your love for the Master be absolute and your obedience to his wishes uncompromising. Work for His Cause to the best of your abilities, but do not let the individuality of your limited vision inculcate feelings of opposition and resentment for your fellows. So long as one has not attained universal conscious-

ness, differences of opinion are bound to exist. But if one has understood their cause, one will not allow them to disturb one's peace of mind. Whatever the outer opposition, whatever the opinions of others, if one has surrendered oneself completely to one's love, then nothing can ever disturb one's equanimity or obstruct one's spiritual course. He who is upset by what others have to say is, without question, one who is still controlled by the ego and has yet to conquer his self. He has yet to learn the rudiments of spirituality.

Let me therefore, command you as a Father, exhort you as a Teacher, persuade you as a Friend, to turn to the reformation and conquest of the self if you seek to progress on the inner path. Try to help others and do the best for them, but be not concerned with the fruits of what you do. That is something that you must leave to the Master. Make your love for Him so complete that, beholding His Hand in everything, you rise above all feelings of enmity, rivalry and resentment. See Him present in all and remember that He is always with you, ready to assist whenever you turn your thoughts to Him. And above all do not forget that He is to be won not by words but by deeds: "If you love me follow my commandments." If you can do this; if you can conquer the self and surrender it at the Feet of the Master; if you can learn to see Him working through all things; if you can accept the fact of your own limited vision; if you can undertake a ceaseless and zealous watch over your thoughts and deeds, weeding out all evils and imperfections – then you shall not only win salvation yourselves but enable others to do likewise. Your example shall shine like a torch in the darkness, and men, even those who may first oppose you, will turn to you for guidance and help. You will find a new sense of peace surging through you, a peace that does not depend on the absence of outer disturbances, but is an inner

state of mind that stands unshaken even in the most tempestuous situations. And this same quality shall enter not only your individual lives, but the larger life of the Great Spiritual movement of which you are a part. Instead of being disrupted and divided, it shall proceed single and purposeful toward its goal.

No true Master has ever been interested in attracting large numbers to Himself; and quantity has never been my aim. It is quality that counts and I would rather have a handful of disciples, nay even one, who can sacrifice their ego on the spiritual altar and learn to live by love, than millions who understand not the value and meaning of these virtues. I have suggested this before, and I emphasize this again that a seeker should be studied more carefully and his/her background learned more before being recommended for initiation. If, after understanding the basic principles of the science, he is willing to undertake this complete remolding of himself that its practice requires, then and then alone, can he become a fit recipient of initiation. And how much more is this need for self-transformation to be stressed in the case of group leaders and representatives. They are the foundations of the movement, and if the foundations are weak, how shall the superstructure stand firmly? Their responsibility is much greater and their effort must be much greater than that of the ordinary initiate. If they really loved me more than their little selves; if they only knew how deeply I suffer when I see them divided and wrangling, they would never have permitted matters to come to such a pass. I am not happy to say this, but I am left no choice.

The chief element that results in disharmony between the representatives, group leaders and other initiates can also be traced to the word "distrust" or

some sort of fear that some of them have acquired certain powers; viz., mind-reading or seeing or listening in on others at a distance, or psychic dominance over others, etc., which they misuse. If any one misuses such powers, those are taken away by the Master immediately. Moreover, they are armed with the repetition of five names by which they have no cause to fear anyone.

Take it as an exhortation, take it as a command, but from this day, this very moment, make love and self-surrender (and the two, as I have already said, are really one) the cornerstones of your life. Do this and you will find your life becoming daily a blessing. I am always with you, waiting for you to turn away from yourselves and towards me. Let not the light that has been planted in you become darkness, but let it flame forth into a blaze that shall illumine the world. The path is strait and narrow and difficult, very difficult and exacting, but for one who is truly willing, every help is promised, and he can attain the goal in this very life; a goal that sets all other goals to shame; for beside it there are no goals at all, but empty baubles and toys, at best halfway houses.

I know the initiates abroad are anxious to see me in person, and I also long to be amidst them. You can well imagine how happy and jolly a father would feel amidst his sons and daughters who are all loving and amicable. I would, therefore, suggest that by the time I make a trip to America, all initiates, including leaders and representatives, make a special effort to live a pure, Christly and Master-like life as is possible, so that all initiates will stand out amongst other men and women shining with love in full bloom, and drenched in the sweet remembrance of the Lord.

Source: *Sat Sandesh* August 1970

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